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THE

HISTORY

OF

THE DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

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WITH NOTES BY DEAN MILMAN AND M. GUIZOT.

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES,

BY WILLIAM SMITH, LL.D.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

With Portrait and Maps.

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Sir Joshua Reynolds pinxt. E. Scriven, sculpt.

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQR

London, Published by John Murray 1854.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

THIS edition of the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' is distinguished by a correct text, the verification of the references to ancient writers, and corrective and supplementary notes. On each of these points a few words of explanation are necessary.

I. The text is carefully reprinted from the last quarto edition corrected by the Author. The work was originally published in six volumes quarto; of which the first appeared in 1776, the second and third in 1781, and the three last in 1788. The first edition of the three last volumes was the only one revised by Gibbon, and in the reprints of the second and third volumes he made hardly any alterations; but the later editions of the first volume differ considerably from the earlier ones. The edition of the first volume published in 1782 is the one from which that portion of the work is here reprinted; but as it contains several typographical errors which do not occur in the first edition, it has been collated with the latter. It is almost unnecessary to state that the text of the original has been faithfully preserved; and the Editor has not allowed himself to introduce any changes even in orthography, except in the case of evident misprints, and of a few modern names, of which the more correct forms are now substituted for those employed by the Author. It seemed pedantic to retain, for instance, such words as *Niester* and *Teyss*, when custom had sanctioned the use of the correct orthography.

II. The references to the ancient writers in Gibbon's notes are of great value to the scholar and the historical student. Their value, however, is considerably diminished by their being frequently made to old editions, the divisions of which no longer correspond to those in general use. Moreover, notwithstanding Gibbon's extreme accuracy, the numerals in his references are not always correct; at which no one will feel surprised who has had experience in the composition or printing of a work containing numerous references, and who knows the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of guard-

ing against such mistakes, even with the exercise of the utmost vigilance. It has been therefore thought desirable to verify afresh all Gibbon's references to ancient writers, and to insert in brackets [ ], by the side of the original quotations, the books and chapters of the best modern editions. This is the first time that this laborious task has been executed; and it is evident that for the purposes of the student it gives the present edition an advantage over all others.

III. It is perhaps not too much to say that the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' is the greatest historical production, whether in ancient or in modern literature; and, at all events, few will be found to demur to the justice of Niebuhr's opinion, that "Gibbon's work will never be excelled." But this very excellence—the fact that a new History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is never likely to supersede Gibbon's immortal work—renders it the more necessary that the successive editions of such a History should contain in the form of notes the advances that have been made in historical knowledge since the time at which it was written. The researches of Niebuhr, Savigny, and the other great philologers and jurists of Germany, the investigations of modern Oriental scholars, both in this country and on the Continent, and the discoveries of our enterprising countrymen in the East, have thrown a new and unexpected light upon many of the subjects comprehended in Gibbon's vast work. In annotating a history which embraces a period of more than twelve centuries it would be easy to multiply notes to any extent; but the present Editor has thought it right to confine his remarks to the correction of the positive errors of Gibbon, and to giving such additional information as the progress of our knowledge requires. He conceives it to be the duty of an Editor, in annotating a work like the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' to which the Author himself appended very numerous notes, to be as brief as possible, to restrict himself to the statement of facts, and to reserve the expression of his opinions for a substantive work of his own.

The notes are partly derived from former commentators, and are partly composed by the present Editor. The former class of notes is taken from the annotated edition of Dean Milman, who, in addition to his own remarks, has given those of M. Guizot and M. Wenck, appended to the French and German translations respectively. In using the valuable materials thus placed at his disposal by the kindness of Dean Milman, the Editor has adhered to the principles mentioned above, and has therefore omitted several notes which seemed to him superfluous. But, while he has exercised an independent judgment in adopting or rejecting the labours of his

predecessors, he desires to acknowledge the great obligations he is under to Dean Milman, whose notes have received the approbation of the most competent scholars, and who has in many parts of the work added everything necessary to correct the errors or supply the deficiencies of the text. This is more especially the case in the chapters relating to Christianity, upon which the Editor has abstained from making any remarks, believing that the criticisms of so distinguished a divine as Dean Milman would be more valuable and satisfactory than any which could be offered by a layman whose studies have lain in another direction.

In addition to the assistance derived from former commentators, the Editor has much pleasure in acknowledging his obligations to his friend Mr. Layard, who has supplied him with valuable information upon the portions of Gibbon's work relating to the geography and history of the East.

All the notes bear the signature of their respective authors: Dean Milman's being marked M. · M. Guizot's, G.; M. Wenck's, W.; and the present Editor's, S.

The Autobiography of Gibbon is prefixed to the present edition, not only on account of the admirable manner in which it is executed, which makes it one of the most charming pieces of autobiography in our language, but also on account of the valuable and interesting information it supplies respecting the composition of the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'

A much more copious Index to the History than has yet appeared is given at the end of the work.

WILLIAM SMITH.

London, February, 1854.

PREFACE BY DEAN MILMAN

TO HIS ANNOTATED EDITION.

THE great work of Gibbon is indispensable to the student of history. The literature of Europe offers no substitute for 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' It has obtained undisputed possession, as rightful occupant, of the vast period which it comprehends. However some subjects which it embraces may have undergone more complete investigation; on the general view of the whole period, this history is the sole undisputed authority to which all defer, and from which few appeal to the original writers, or to more modern compilers. The inherent interest of the subject, the inexhaustible labour employed upon it; the immense condensation of matter; the luminous arrangement; the general accuracy; the style, which, however monotonous from its uniform stateliness, and sometimes wearisome from its elaborate art, is throughout vigorous, animated, often picturesque, always commands attention, always conveys its meaning with emphatic energy, describes with singular breadth and fidelity, and generalises with unrivalled felicity of expression; all these high qualifications have secured, and seem likely to secure, its permanent place in historic literature.

This vast design of Gibbon, the magnificent whole into which he has cast the decay and ruin of the ancient civilisation, the formation and birth of the new order of things, will of itself, independent of the laborious execution of his immense plan, render 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' an unapproachable subject to the future historian:[1] in the eloquent language of his recent French editor, M. Guizot:—

"The gradual decline of the most extraordinary dominion which has ever invaded and oppressed the world; the fall of that immense empire, erected on the ruins of so many kingdoms, republics, and states both barbarous and civilised; and forming in its turn, by its dismemberment, a multitude of states, republics, and kingdoms; the

[1] A considerable portion of this preface had already appeared before the public in the Quarterly Review.

annihilation of the religion of Greece and Rome; the birth and the progress of the two new religions which have shared the most beautiful regions of the earth; the decrepitude of the ancient world, the spectacle of its expiring glory and degenerate manners; the infancy of the modern world, the picture of its first progress, of the new direction given to the mind and character of man—such a subject must necessarily fix the attention and excite the interest of men, who cannot behold with indifference those memorable epochs, during which, in the fine language of Corneille—

'Un grand destin commence, un grand destin s'achève.'"

This extent and harmony of design is unquestionably that which distinguishes the work of Gibbon from all other great historical compositions. He has first bridged the abyss between ancient and modern times, and connected together the two worlds of history. The great advantage which the classical historians possess over those of modern times is in unity of plan, of course greatly facilitated by the narrower sphere to which their researches were confined. Except Herodotus, the great historians of Greece—we exclude the more modern compilers, like Diodorus Siculus—limited themselves to a single period, or at least to the contracted sphere of Grecian affairs. As far as the *Barbarians* trespassed within the Grecian boundary, or were necessarily mingled up with Grecian politics, they were admitted into the pale of Grecian history; but to Thucydides and to Xenophon, excepting in the Persian inroad of the latter, Greece was the world. Natural unity confined their narrative almost to chronological order, the episodes were of rare occurrence and extremely brief. To the Roman historians the course was equally clear and defined. Rome was their centre of unity; and the uniformity with which the circle of the Roman dominion spread around, the regularity with which their civil polity expanded, forced, as it were, upon the Roman historian that plan which Polybius announces as the subject of his history, the means and the manner by which the whole world became subject to the Roman sway. How different the complicated politics of the European kingdoms! Every national history, to be complete, must, in a certain sense, be the history of Europe; there is no knowing to how remote a quarter it may be necessary to trace our most domestic events; from a country, how apparently disconnected, may originate the impulse which gives its direction to the whole course of affairs.

In imitation of his classical models, Gibbon places *Rome* as the cardinal point from which his inquiries diverge, and to which they bear constant reference: yet how immeasurable the space over which those inquiries range! how complicated, how confused, how appa-

rently inextricable the causes which tend to the decline of the Roman empire! how countless the nations which swarm forth, in mingling and indistinct hordes, constantly changing the geographical limits—incessantly confounding the natural boundaries! At first sight, the whole period, the whole state of the world seems to offer no more secure footing to an historical adventurer than the chaos of Milton—to be in a state of irreclaimable disorder, best described in the language of the poet:—

> "A dark
> Illimitable ocean, without bound,
> Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,
> And time, and place, are lost: where eldest Night
> And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
> Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
> Of endless wars, and by confusion stand."

We feel that the unity and the harmony of narrative, which shall comprehend this period of social disorganisation, must be ascribed entirely to the skill and luminous disposition of the historian. It is in this sublime Gothic architecture of his work, in which the boundless range, the infinite variety, the, at first sight, incongruous gorgeousness of the separate parts, nevertheless are all subordinate to one main and predominant idea, that Gibbon is unrivalled. We cannot but admire the manner in which he masses his materials, and arranges his facts in successive groups, not according to chronological order, but to their moral or political connection; the distinctness with which he marks his periods of gradually increasing decay; and the skill with which, though advancing on separate parallels of history, he shows the common tendency of the slower or more rapid religious or civil innovations. However these principles of composition may demand more than ordinary attention on the part of the reader, they can alone impress upon the memory the real course and the relative importance of the events. Whoever would justly appreciate the superiority of Gibbon's lucid arrangement, should attempt to make his way through the regular but wearisome annals of Tillemont, or even the less ponderous volumes of Le Beau. Both these writers adhere, almost entirely, to chronological order; the consequence is, that we are twenty times called upon to break off and resume the thread of six or eight wars in different parts of the empire; to suspend the operations of a military expedition for a court intrigue; to hurry away from a siege to a council; and the same page places us in the middle of a campaign against the barbarians, and in the depths of the Monophysite controversy. In Gibbon it is not always easy to bear in mind the exact dates, but the course of events is ever clear and distinct; like a skilful general, though his troops advance from the most remote and opposite quarters, they are constantly

bearing down and concentrating themselves on one point, that which is still occupied by the name and by the waning power of Rome. Whether he traces the progress of hostile religions, or leads from the shores of the Baltic, or the verge of the Chinese empire, the successive hosts of barbarians—though one wave has hardly burst and discharged itself before another swells up and approaches—all is made to flow in the same direction, and the impression which each makes upon the tottering fabric of the Roman greatness, connects their distant movements, and measures the relative importance assigned to them in the panoramic history. The more peaceful and didactic episodes on the development of the Roman law, or even on the details of ecclesiastical history, interpose themselves as resting places or divisions between the periods of barbaric invasion. In short, though distracted first by the two capitals, and afterwards by the formal partition of the empire, the extraordinary felicity of arrangement maintains an order and a regular progression. As our horizon expands to reveal to us the gathering tempests which are forming far beyond the boundaries of the civilised world—as we follow their successive approach to the trembling frontier—the compressed and receding line is still distinctly visible; though gradually dismembered, and the broken fragments assuming the form of regular states and kingdoms, the real relation of those kingdoms to the empire is maintained and defined; and even when the Roman dominion has shrunk into little more than the province of Thrace—when the name of Rome is confined, in Italy, to the walls of the city—yet it is still the memory, the shade of the Roman greatness, which extends over the wide sphere into which the historian expands his later narrative; the whole blends into the unity, and is manifestly essential to the double catastrophe of his tragic drama.

But the amplitude, the magnificence, or the harmony of design, are, though imposing, yet unworthy claims on our admiration, unless the details are filled up with correctness and accuracy. No writer has been more severely tried on this point than Gibbon. He has undergone the triple scrutiny of theological zeal quickened by just resentment—of literary emulation—and of that mean and invidious vanity which delights in detecting errors in writers of established fame. On the result of the trial we may be permitted to summon competent witnesses before we deliver our own judgment.

M. Guizot, in his preface, after stating that in France and Germany, as well as in England, in the most enlightened countries of Europe, Gibbon is constantly cited as an authority, thus proceeds:—

"I have had occasion, during my labours, to consult the writings of philosophers who have treated on the finances of the Roman

empire; of scholars who have investigated the chronology; of theologians who have searched the depths of ecclesiastical history; of writers on law who have studied with care the Roman jurisprudence; of Orientalists who have occupied themselves with the Arabians and the Koran; of modern historians who have entered upon extensive researches touching the crusades and their influence; each of these writers has remarked and pointed out, in the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, some negligences, some false or imperfect views, some omissions, which it is impossible not to suppose voluntary; they have rectified some facts, combated with advantage some assertions; but in general they have taken the researches and the ideas of Gibbon, as points of departure, or as proofs of the researches, or of the new opinions which they have advanced."

M. Guizot goes on to state his own impressions on reading Gibbon's history, and no authority will have greater weight with those to whom the extent and accuracy of his historical researches are known:—

"After a first rapid perusal, which allowed me to feel nothing but the interest of a narrative, always animated, and, notwithstanding its extent and the variety of objects which it makes to pass before the view, always perspicuous, I entered upon a minute examination of the details of which it was composed; and the opinion which I then formed was, I confess, singularly severe. I discovered, in certain chapters, errors which appeared to me sufficiently important and numerous to make me believe that they had been written with extreme negligence; in others, I was struck with a certain tinge of partiality and prejudice, which imparted to the exposition of the facts that want of truth and justice which the English express by their happy term *misrepresentation*. Some imperfect (*tronquées*) quotations; some passages, omitted unintentionally or designedly, cast a suspicion on the honesty (*bonne foi*) of the author; and his violation of the first law of history—increased to my eyes by the prolonged attention with which I occupied myself with every phrase, every note, every reflection—caused me to form, upon the whole work, a judgment far too rigorous. After having finished my labours, I allowed some time to elapse before I reviewed the whole. A second attentive and regular perusal of the entire work, of the notes of the author, and of those which I had thought it right to subjoin, showed me how much I had exaggerated the importance of the reproaches which Gibbon really deserved; I was struck with the same errors, the same partiality on certain subjects; but I had been far from doing adequate justice to the immensity of his researches, the variety of his knowledge, and above all, to that truly philoso-

phical discrimination (*justesse d'esprit*) which judges the past as it would judge the present; which does not permit itself to be blinded by the clouds which time gathers around the dead, and which prevent us from seeing that, under the toga, as under the modern dress, in the senate as in our councils, men were what they still are, and that events took place eighteen centuries ago as they take place in our days. I then felt that his book, in spite of its faults, will always be a noble work—and that we may correct his errors and combat his prejudices without ceasing to admit that few men have combined, if we are not to say in so high a degree, at least in a manner so complete and so well regulated, the necessary qualifications for a writer of history."

The present editor has followed the track of Gibbon through many parts of his work; he has read his authorities with constant reference to his pages, and must pronounce his deliberate judgment in terms of the highest admiration as to his general accuracy. Many of his seeming errors are almost inevitable from the close condensation of his matter. From the immense range of his history, it was sometimes necessary to compress into a single sentence a whole vague and diffuse page of a Byzantine chronicler. Perhaps something of importance may have thus escaped, and his expressions may not quite contain the whole substance of the passage from which they are taken. His limits, at times, compel him to sketch; where that is the case, it is not fair to expect the full details of the finished picture. At times he can only deal with important results; and in his account of a war, it sometimes requires great attention to discover that the events, which seem to be comprehended in a single campaign, occupy several years. But this admirable skill in selecting and giving prominence to the points which are of real weight and importance—this distribution of light and shade—though perhaps it may occasionally betray him into vague and imperfect statements, is one of the highest excellences of Gibbon's historic manner. It is the more striking, when we pass from the works of his chief authorities, where, after labouring through long, minute, and wearisome descriptions of the accessary and subordinate circumstances, a single unmarked and undistinguished sentence, which we may overlook from the inattention of fatigue, contains the great moral and political result.

Gibbon's method of arrangement, though on the whole most favourable to the clear comprehension of the events, leads likewise to apparent inaccuracy. That which we expect to find in one part is reserved for another. The estimate which we are to form depends on the accurate balance of statements in remote parts of the work;

and we have sometimes to correct and modify opinions, formed from one chapter, by those of another. Yet, on the other hand, it is astonishing how rarely we detect contradiction; the mind of the author has already harmonised the whole result to truth and probability; the general impression is almost invariably the same. The quotations of Gibbon have likewise been called in question—I have *in general* been more inclined to admire their exactitude than to complain of their indistinctness or incompleteness. Where they are imperfect, it is commonly from the study of brevity, and rather from the desire of compressing the substance of his notes into pointed and emphatic sentences, than from dishonesty or uncandid suppression of truth.

These observations apply more particularly to the accuracy and fidelity of the historian as to his facts; his inferences, of course, are more liable to exception. It is almost impossible to trace the line between unfairness and unfaithfulness; between intentional misrepresentation and undesigned false colouring. The relative magnitude and importance of events must, in some respect, depend upon the mind before which they are presented; the estimate of character on the habits and feelings of the reader. Christians, like M. Guizot and ourselves, will see some things, and some persons, in a different light from the historian of the Decline and Fall. We may deplore the bias of his mind; we may, ourselves, be on our guard against the danger of being misled, and be anxious to warn less wary readers against the same perils; but we must not confound this secret and unconscious departure from truth with the deliberate violation of that veracity which is the only title of an historian to our confidence. Gibbon, it may be fearlessly asserted, is rarely chargeable even with the suppression of any material fact which bears upon individual character; he may, with apparently invidious hostility, enhance the errors and crimes and disparage the virtues of certain persons; yet in general he leaves us the materials for forming a fairer judgment; and if he is not exempt from his own prejudices, perhaps we might write passions, yet it must be candidly acknowledged that his philosophical bigotry is not more unjust than the theological partialities of those ecclesiastical writers who were before in undisputed possession of this province of history.

We are thus naturally led to that great misrepresentation which pervades his history—his false estimate of the nature and influence of Christianity.

But on this subject some preliminary caution is necessary, lest that should be expected from a new edition, which it is impossible that it should completely accomplish. We must first be prepared

with the only sound preservative against the false impression likely to be produced by the perusal of Gibbon; and we must see clearly the real cause of that false impression. The former of these cautions will be briefly suggested in its proper place, but it may be as well to state it here somewhat more at length. The art of Gibbon, or at least the unfair impression produced by his two memorable chapters, consists in his confounding together, in one indistinguishable mass, the *origin* and *apostolic* propagation of the new religion with its *later* progress. No argument for the divine authority of Christianity has been urged with greater force, or traced with higher eloquence, than that deduced from its primary development, explicable on no other hypothesis than a heavenly origin, and from its rapid extension through great part of the Roman empire. But this argument—one, when confined within reasonable limits, of unanswerable force—becomes more feeble and disputable in proportion as it recedes from the birthplace, as it were, of the religion. The further Christianity advanced, the more causes, purely human, were enlisted in its favour; nor can it be doubted that those developed with such artful exclusiveness by Gibbon did concur most essentially to its establishment. It is in the Christian dispensation as in the material world. In both it is as the great First Cause that the Deity is most undeniably manifest. When once launched in regular motion upon the bosom of space, and endowed with all their properties and relations of weight and mutual attraction, the heavenly bodies appear to pursue their courses according to secondary laws, which account for all their sublime regularity. So Christianity proclaims its Divine Author chiefly in its first origin and development. When it had once received its impulse from above—when it had once been infused into the minds of its first teachers—when it had gained full possession of the reason and affections of the favoured few—it *might be*—and to the Protestant, the rational Christian, it is impossible to define *when* it really *was*—left to make its way by its native force, under the ordinary secret agencies of all-ruling Providence. The main question, the *divine origin of the religion*, was dexterously eluded or speciously conceded by Gibbon; his plan enabled him to commence his account in most parts *below the apostolic times;* and it was only by the strength of the dark colouring with which he brought out the failings and the follies of the succeeding ages, that a shadow of doubt and suspicion was thrown back upon the primitive period of Christianity.

"The theologian," says Gibbon, "may indulge the pleasing task of describing religion as she descended from heaven, arrayed in her native purity; a more melancholy duty is imposed upon the historian:—he must discover the inevitable mixture of error and cor-

ruption, which she contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings." Divest this passage of the latent sarcasm betrayed by the subsequent tone of the whole disquisition, and it might commence a Christian history written in the most Christian spirit of candour. But as the historian, by seeming to respect, yet by dexterously confounding, the limits of the sacred land, contrived to insinuate that it was an Utopia which had no existence but in the imagination of the theologian—as he *suggested* rather than affirmed that the days of Christian purity were a kind of poetic golden age;—so the theologian, by venturing too far into the domain of the historian, has been perpetually obliged to contest points on which he had little chance of victory—to deny facts established on unshaken evidence—and thence to retire, if not with the shame of defeat, yet with but doubtful and imperfect success.

Paley, with his intuitive sagacity, saw through the difficulty of answering Gibbon by the ordinary arts of controversy; his emphatic sentence, "Who can refute a sneer?" contains as much truth as point. But, full and pregnant as this phrase is, it is not quite the whole truth; it is the tone in which the progress of Christianity is traced, in *comparison* with the rest of the splendid and prodigally ornamented work, which is the radical defect in the 'Decline and Fall.' Christianity alone receives no embellishment from the magic of Gibbon's language; his imagination is dead to its moral dignity; it is kept down by a general tone of jealous disparagement, or neutralized by a painfully elaborate exposition of its darker and degenerate periods. There are occasions, indeed, when its pure and exalted humanity, when its manifestly beneficial influence, can compel even him, as it were, to fairness, and kindle his unguarded eloquence to its usual fervour; but in general he soon relapses into a frigid apathy: *affects* an ostentatiously severe impartiality; notes all the faults of Christians in every age with bitter and almost malignant sarcasm; reluctantly, and with exception and reservation, admits their claim to admiration. This inextricable bias appears even to influence his manner of composition. While all the other assailants of the Roman empire, whether warlike or religious, the Goth, the Hun, the Arab, the Tartar, Alaric and Attila, Mahomet, and Zengis, and Tamerlane, are each introduced upon the scene almost with dramatic animation—their progress related in a full, complete, and unbroken narrative—the triumph of Christianity alone takes the form of a cold and critical disquisition. The successes of barbarous energy and brute force call forth all the consummate skill of composition; while the moral triumphs of Christian benevolence, the tranquil heroism of endurance, the blameless purity, the contempt of guilty fame and of honours destructive to the human race, which,

had they assumed the proud name of philosophy, would have been blazoned in his brightest words, because they own religion as their principle, sink into narrow asceticism. The *glories* of Christianity, in short, touch on no chord in the heart of the writer; his imagination remains unkindled; his words, though they maintain their stately and measured march, have become cool, argumentative, and inanimate. Who would obscure one hue of that gorgeous colouring in which Gibbon has invested the dying forms of Paganism; or darken one paragraph in his splendid view of the rise and progress of Mahometanism? but who would not have wished that the same equal justice had been done to Christianity; that its real character and deeply penetrating influence had been traced with the same philosophical sagacity, and represented with more sober, as would become its quiet course, and perhaps less picturesque, but still with lively and attractive descriptiveness? He might have thrown aside with the same scorn the mass of ecclesiastical fiction which envelopes the early history of the church, stripped off the legendary romance, and brought out the facts in their primitive nakedness and simplicity, if he had but allowed those facts the benefit of the glowing eloquence which he denied to them alone. He might have annihilated the whole fabric of post-apostolic miracles, if he had left uninjured by sarcastic insinuation those of the New Testament; he might have cashiered, with Dodwell, the whole host of martyrs, which owe their existence to the prodigal invention of later days, had he but bestowed fair room, and dwelt with his ordinary energy, on the sufferings of the genuine witnesses to the truth of Christianity, the Polycarps or the martyrs of Vienne.

And indeed, if, after all, the view of the early progress of Christianity be melancholy and humiliating, we must beware lest we charge the whole of this on the infidelity of the historian. It is idle, it is disingenuous, to deny or to dissemble the early depravations of Christianity, its gradual but rapid departure from its primitive simplicity and purity, still more from its spirit of universal love. It may be no unsalutary lesson to the Christian world, that this silent, this unavoidable perhaps, yet fatal change shall have been drawn by an impartial, or even an hostile hand. The Christianity of every age may take warning, lest by its own narrow views, its want of wisdom, and its want of charity, it give the same advantage to the future unfriendly historian, and disparage the cause of true religion.

The design of the present edition is partly corrective, partly supplementary: corrective, by notes, which point out (it is hoped, in a perfectly candid and dispassionate spirit, with no desire but to establish the truth) such inaccuracies or misstatements as may have

been detected, particularly with regard to Christianity; and which thus, with the previous caution, may counteract to a considerable extent the unfair and unfavourable impression created against rational religion; supplementary, by adding such additional information as the editor's reading may have been able to furnish, from original documents or books, not accessible at the time when Gibbon wrote.

The work originated in the editor's habit of noting on the margin of his copy of Gibbon references to such authors as had discovered errors, or thrown new light on the subjects treated by Gibbon. These had grown to some extent, and seemed to him likely to be of use to others. The annotations of M. Guizot also appeared to him worthy of being better known to the English public than they were likely to be as appended to the French translation.

The chief works from which the editor has derived his materials are, I.—The French translation, with notes by M. Guizot; 2nd edition, Paris, 1828. The editor has translated almost all the notes of M. Guizot. Where he has not altogether agreed with him, his respect for the learning and judgment of that writer has, in general, induced him to retain the statement from which he has ventured to differ, with the grounds on which he has formed his own opinion.[1] In the notes on Christianity, he has retained all those of M. Guizot, with his own, from the conviction, that on such a subject, to many, the authority of a French statesman, a Protestant, and a rational and sincere Christian, would appear more independent and unbiassed, and therefore be more commanding, than that of an English clergyman.

The editor has not scrupled to transfer the notes of M. Guizot to the present work. The well-known zeal for knowledge displayed in all the writings of that distinguished historian, has led to the natural inference, that he would not be displeased at the attempt to make them of use to the English readers of Gibbon. The notes of M. Guizot are signed with the letter G.

II.—The German translation, with the notes of Wenck. Unfortunately this learned translator died after having completed only the first volume: the rest of the work was executed by a very inferior hand.

The notes of Wenck are extremely valuable; many of them have been adopted by M. Guizot; they are distinguished by the letter W.[2]

[1] Most of such Notes have been omitted by the present editor, for the reasons assigned in his Preface.—S.

[2] The editor regrets that he has not been able to find the Italian translation, mentioned by Gibbon himself with some respect. It is not in our great libraries, the Museum or the Bodleian; and he has never found any bookseller in London who has seen it.

III.—The new edition of Le Beau's 'Histoire du Bas Empire, with notes by M. St. Martin, and M. Brosset.'—That distinguished Armenian scholar, M. St. Martin (now, unhappily, deceased), had added much information from Oriental writers, particularly from those of Armenia, as well as from more general sources. Many of his observations have been found as applicable to the work of Gibbon as to that of Le Beau.

IV.—The editor has consulted the various answers made to Gibbon on the first appearance of his work; he must confess, with little profit. They were in general hastily compiled by inferior and now forgotten writers, with the exception of Bishop Watson, whose able apology is rather a general argument than an examination of misstatements. The name of Milner stands higher with a certain class of readers, but will not carry much weight with the severe investigator of history.

V.—Some few classical works and fragments have come to light since the appearance of Gibbon's History, and have been noticed in their respective places; and much use has been made, in the later volumes particularly, of the increase to our stores of Oriental literature. The editor cannot, indeed, pretend to have followed his author in these gleanings over the whole vast field of his inquiries; he may have overlooked or may not have been able to command some works which might have thrown still further light on these subjects; but he trusts that what he has adduced will be of use to the student of historic truth.

The editor would further observe, that with regard to some other objectionable passages, which do not involve misstatement or inaccuracy, he has intentionally abstained from directing particular attention towards them by any special protest.

The editor's notes are marked M.

A considerable part of the quotations (some of which in the later editions had fallen into great confusion) have been verified, and have been corrected by the latest and best editions of the authors.

JUNE, 1845.

IN this new edition the text and the notes have been carefully revised, the latter by the editor.

Some additional notes have been subjoined, distinguished by the signature—M. 1845.

PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

It is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety or the importance of the subject which I have undertaken to treat; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But as I have presumed to lay before the public a *first* volume only[1] of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable series of revolutions which, in the course of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods:—

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline, and will extend to the subversion of the Western Empire by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendour to the eastern empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, established the second, or German Empire of the West.

[1] The first volume of the quarto, which contained the sixteen first chapters.

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half; from the revival of the Western Empire, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city, in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long since forgotten. The writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the Crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some inquiry into the state of the city of Rome during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press a work which, in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect, I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably in a second volume,[2] the first of these memorable periods; and to deliver to the public the complete History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines to the subversion of the Western Empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described would connect the ancient and modern history of the world: but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

Bentinck-Street, February 1, 1776.

P.S. The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, abundantly discharges my engagements with the public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

Bentinck-Street, March 1, 1781.

An author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favourable to his labours; and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in

[2] The author, as it frequently happens, took an inadequate measure of his growing work. The remainder of the first period has filled *two* volumes in quarto, being the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of the octavo edition.

the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. The most patient reader, who computes that three ponderous[3] volumes have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may perhaps be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian, and the conquests of the Mahometans, will deserve and detain our attention, and the last age of Constantinople (the Crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts as may still appear either interesting or important.

Bentinck-Street, March 1, 1782.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE NOTES.[a]

DILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit indeed can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may therefore be allowed to say that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extensive design which has been sketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded that it would be susceptible of entertainment, as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation. The biographers who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed, or rather compiled, the lives of the Emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned under the names of Ælius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Ælius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus. But there is so much perplexity in the titles of the MSS., and so many disputes have arisen

[3] The first thirty-eight chapters of the work.—S.

[a] The notes in the first edition of the first quarto volume were printed apart from the text at the end of the volume.—S

among the critics (see Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin., l. iii. c. 6) concerning their number, their names, and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Augustan History*.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST OCTAVO EDITION.

THE History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had presented themselves to my mind, but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchasers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the corrector of the press has been already tried and approved; and perhaps I may stand excused if, amidst the avocations of a busy winter, I have preferred the pleasures of composition and study to the minute diligence of revising a former publication.

Bentinck-Street, April 20, 1783.

PREFACE

TO THE

FOURTH VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL QUARTO EDITION.

I NOW discharge my promise, and complete my design, of writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, both in the West and the East. The whole period extends from the age of Trajan and the Antonines to the taking of Constantinople by Mahomet the Second; and includes a review of the Crusades, and the state of Rome during the middle ages. Since the publication of the first volume twelve years have elapsed; twelve years, according to my wish, "of health, of leisure, and of perseverance." I may now congratulate my deliverance from a long and laborious service, and my satisfaction will be pure and perfect if the public favour should be extended to the conclusion of my work.

It was my first intention to have collected, under one view, the numerous authors, of every age and language, from whom I have derived the materials of this history; and I am still convinced that the apparent ostentation would be more than compensated by real use. If I have renounced this idea, if I have declined an undertaking which had obtained the approbation of a master-artist,[a] my excuse may be found in the extreme difficulty of assigning a proper measure to such a catalogue. A naked list of names and editions would not be satisfactory either to myself or my readers: the characters of the principal authors of the Roman and Byzantine History have been occasionally connected with the events which they describe; a more copious and critical inquiry might indeed deserve, but it would demand, an elaborate volume, which might swell by degrees into a general library of historical writers. For the present I shall content myself with renewing my serious protestation, that I have always endeavoured to draw from the fountain-head; that my curiosity, as well as a sense of duty, has always urged me to study the originals; and that, if they have sometimes eluded my search, I have carefully marked the secondary evidence, on whose faith a passage or a fact were reduced to depend.

[a] See Dr. Robertson's Preface to his History of America.

I shall soon revisit the banks of the lake of Lausanne, a country which I have known and loved from my early youth. Under a mild government, amidst a beauteous landscape, in a life of leisure and independence, and among a people of easy and elegant manners, I have enjoyed, and may again hope to enjoy, the varied pleasures of retirement and society. But I shall ever glory in the name and character of an Englishman: I am proud of my birth in a free and enlightened country; and the approbation of that country is the best and most honourable reward of my labours. Were I ambitious of any other patron than the public, I would inscribe this work to a Statesman who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy; who has retained, in his fall from power, many faithful and disinterested friends; and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigour of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. LORD NORTH will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth: but even truth and friendship should be silent, if he still dispensed the favours of the crown.

In a remote solitude, vanity may still whisper in my ear, that my readers perhaps may inquire whether, in the conclusion of the present work, I am now taking an everlasting farewell. They shall hear all that I know myself, and all that I could reveal to the most intimate friend. The motives of action or silence are now equally balanced; nor can I pronounce in my most secret thoughts on which side the scale will preponderate. I cannot dissemble that six ample quartos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the public; that, in the repetition of similar attempts, a successful author has much more to lose than he can hope to gain; that I am now descending into the vale of years; and that the most respectable of my countrymen, the men whom I aspire to imitate, have resigned the pen of history about the same period of their lives. Yet I consider that the annals of ancient and modern times may afford many rich and interesting subjects; that I am still possessed of health and leisure; that by the practice of writing, some skill and facility must be acquired; and that, in the ardent pursuit of truth and knowledge, I am not conscious of decay. To an active mind, indolence is more painful than labour; and the first months of my liberty will be occupied and amused in the excursions of curiosity and taste. By such temptations I have been sometimes seduced from the rigid duty even of a pleasing and voluntary task: but my time will now be my own; and in the use or abuse of independence, I shall no longer fear my own reproaches or those of my friends. I am fairly entitled

to a year of jubilee: next summer and the following winter will rapidly pass away; and experience only can determine whether I shall still prefer the freedom and variety of study to the design and composition of a regular work, which animates, while it confines, the daily application of the author. Caprice and accident may influence my choice; but the dexterity of self-love will contrive to applaud either active industry or philosophic repose.

Downing-Street, May 1, 1788.

P.S. I shall embrace this opportunity of introducing two *verbal* remarks, which have not conveniently offered themselves to my notice. 1. As often as I use the definitions of *beyond* the Alps, the Rhine, the Danube, &c., I generally suppose myself at Rome, and afterwards at Constantinople; without observing whether this relative geography may agree with the local, but variable, situation of the reader or the historian. 2. In proper names of foreign, and especially of Oriental origin, it should be always our aim to express in our English version a faithful copy of the original. But this rule, which is founded on a just regard to uniformity and truth, must often be relaxed; and the exceptions will be limited or enlarged by the custom of the language and the taste of the interpreter. Our alphabets may be often defective; a harsh sound, an uncouth spelling, might offend the ear or the eye of our countrymen: and some words, notoriously corrupt, are fixed, and, as it were, naturalised in the vulgar tongue. The prophet *Mohammed* can no longer be stripped of the famous, though improper, appellation of Mahomet: the well-known cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, would almost be lost in the strange descriptions of *Haleb*, *Demashk*, and *Al Cahira:* the titles and offices of the Ottoman empire are fashioned by the practice of three hundred years; and we are pleased to blend the three Chinese monosyllables, *Con-fû-tzee*, in the respectable name of Confucius, or even to adopt the Portuguese corruption of Mandarin. But I would vary the use of Zoroaster and *Zerdusht*, as I drew my information from Greece or Persia: since our connection with India, the genuine *Timour* is restored to the throne of Tamerlane: our most correct writers have retrenched the *Al*, the superfluous article, from the Koran; and we escape an ambiguous termination by adopting *Moslem* instead of Musulman in the plural number. In these, and in a thousand examples, the shades of distinction are often minute; and I can feel, where I cannot explain, the motives of my choice.

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MAP OF EASTERN PART OF ROMAN EMPIRE } . . . . . *At end of Volume*
MAP OF WESTERN PART OF ROMAN EMPIRE }

MEMOIRS

OF

MY LIFE AND WRITINGS.

[The following Autobiography was published after Gibbon's death, with his other miscellaneous works, by his friend and executor, Lord Sheffield, in 1795. In the Preface Lord Sheffield remarks,—"The most important part consists of Memoirs of Mr. Gibbon's Life and Writings, a work which he seems to have projected with peculiar solicitude and attention, and of which he left six different sketches, all in his own handwriting. One of the sketches, the most diffuse and circumstantial, so far as it proceeds, ends at the time when he quitted Oxford. Another at the year 1764, when he travelled to Italy. A third at his father's death, in 1770. A fourth, which he continued to March, 1791, appears in the form of Annals, much less detailed than the others. The two remaining sketches are still more imperfect. But it is difficult to discover the order in which these several pieces were written. From all of them the following Memoirs have been carefully selected and put together."

The admirable manner in which Gibbon executed the sketch of his own Life, as well as the total deficiency of materials for a new Biography, altogether preclude the attempt to recompose the Life of the Author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. The writer of a very able criticism on Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, in the Quarterly Review, vol. xii. p. 375 (the late Dr. Whitaker, the Historian of Craven, and the Editor of Piers Ploughman's Vision and Creed), thus felicitously and justly characterises the Life of Gibbon:—"It is perhaps the best specimen of Autobiography in the English language. Descending from the lofty level of his History, and relaxing the stately march which he maintains throughout that work, into a more natural and easy pace, this enchanting writer, with an ease, spirit, and vigour peculiar to himself, conducts his readers through a sickly childhood, a neglected and desultory education, and a youth wasted in the unpromising and unscholar-like occupation of a militia officer, to the period when he resolutely applied

the energies of his genius to a severe course of voluntary study, which, in the space of a few years, rendered him a consummate master of Roman antiquity, and lastly produced the history of the decline and fall of that mighty empire."]

In the fifty-second year of my age, after the completion of an arduous and successful work, I now propose to employ some moments of my leisure in reviewing the simple transactions of a private and literary life. Truth, naked, unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history, must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative. The style shall be simple and familiar; but style is the image of character; and the habits of correct writing may produce, without labour or design, the appearance of art and study. My own amusement is my motive, and will be my reward: and if these sheets are communicated to some discreet and indulgent friends, they will be secreted from the public eye till the author shall be removed beyond the reach of criticism or ridicule.[1]

A lively desire of knowing and of recording our ancestors so generally prevails, that it must depend on the influence of some common principle in the minds of men. We seem to have lived in the persons of our forefathers; it is the labour and reward of vanity to extend the term of this ideal longevity. Our imagination is always active to enlarge the narrow circle in which Nature has confined us. Fifty or an hundred years may be allotted to an individual; but we step forward beyond death with such hopes as religion and philosophy will suggest; and we fill up the silent vacancy that precedes our birth, by associating ourselves to the

[1] This passage is found in one only of the six sketches, and in that which seems to have been the first written, and which was laid aside among loose papers. Mr. Gibbon, in his communications with me on the subject of his Memoirs, a subject which he had not mentioned to any other person, expressed a determination of publishing them in his lifetime; and never appears to have departed from that resolution, excepting in one of his letters, in which he intimates a doubt, though rather carelessly, whether in his time, or at any time, they would meet the eye of the public.—In a conversation, however, not long before his death, I suggested to him that, if he should make them a full image of his mind, he would not have nerves to publish them, and therefore that they should be posthumous. He answered, rather eagerly, that he was determined to publish them *in his lifetime*.—SHEFFIELD.[a]

[a] The late Lord Sheffield, by a clause in his will, positively prohibited the publication of any more out of the mass of Gibbon's papers in the possession of his family. By the kind favour of the present Lord Sheffield, I have been permitted (of course with the distinct understanding that the will of his father should be rigidly respected) to see these six sketches of the life, written in Gibbon's own clear and elaborate hand. I may venture, however, to bear my testimony to the great judgment with which the late Lord Sheffield exercised his office of editor in this part of Gibbon's works; much has been rejected in which the public would not have felt the slightest interest, and I found not above two or three sentences which I should have wished to rescue from oblivion.—M.

authors of our existence. Our calmer judgment will rather tend to moderate, than to suppress, the pride of an ancient and worthy race. The satirist[2] may laugh, the philosopher may preach, but Reason herself will respect the prejudices and habits which have been consecrated by the experience of mankind. Few there are who can sincerely despise in others an advantage of which they are secretly ambitious to partake. The knowledge of our own family from a remote period will be always esteemed as an abstract pre-eminence, since it can never be promiscuously enjoyed; but the longest series of peasants and mechanics would not afford much gratification to the pride of their descendant. We wish to discover our ancestors, but we wish to discover them possessed of ample fortunes, adorned with honourable titles, and holding an eminent rank in the class of hereditary nobles, which has been maintained for the wisest and most beneficial purposes, in almost every climate of the globe, and in almost every modification of political society.

Wherever the distinction of birth is allowed to form a superior order in the state, education and example should always, and will often, produce among them a dignity of sentiment and propriety of conduct, which is guarded from dishonour by their own and the public esteem. If we read of some illustrious line, so ancient that it has no beginning, so worthy that it ought to have no end, we sympathize in its various fortunes; nor can we blame the generous enthusiasm, or even the harmless vanity, of those who are allied to the honours of its name. For my own part, could I draw my pedigree from a general, a statesman, or a celebrated author, I should study their lives with the diligence of filial love. In the investigation of past events our curiosity is stimulated by the immediate or indirect reference to ourselves; but in the estimate of honour we should learn to value the gifts of Nature above those of Fortune; to esteem in our ancestors the qualities that best promote the interests of society; and to pronounce the descendant of a king less truly noble than the offspring of a man of genius, whose writings will instruct or delight the latest posterity. The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world. After a painful ascent of eight or ten centuries, our barons and princes of Europe are lost in the darkness of the middle ages; but, in the vast equality of the empire of China, the posterity of Confucius have maintained, above two thousand two hundred years, their peaceful honours and perpetual succession. The chief of the family is still revered, by the sovereign and the people, as the lively image of the wisest of mankind. The nobility of the Spencers has been illustrated and enriched

[2] Gibbon probably alludes to the splendid eighth Satire of Juvenal.—M.

by the trophies of Marlborough; but I exhort them to consider the *Fairy Queen*[3] as the most precious jewel of their coronet. Our immortal Fielding was of the younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh, who draw their origin from the Counts of Habsburg, the lineal descendants of Eltrico, in the seventh century Duke of Alsace. Far different have been the fortunes of the English and German divisions of the family of Habsburg: the former, the knights and sheriffs of Leicestershire, have slowly risen to the dignity of a peerage; the latter, the Emperors of Germany and Kings of Spain, have threatened the liberty of the old, and invaded the treasures of the new world. The successors of Charles the Fifth may disdain their brethren of England; but the romance of Tom Jones, that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial, and the imperial eagle of the house of Austria.

That these sentiments are just, or at least natural, I am the more inclined to believe, as I am not myself interested in the cause; for I can derive from my ancestors neither glory nor shame. Yet a sincere and simple narrative of my own life may amuse some of my leisure hours; but it will subject me, and perhaps with justice, to the imputation of vanity. I may judge, however, from the experience both of past and of the present times, that the public are always curious to know the men who have left behind them any image of their minds: the most scanty accounts of such men are compiled with diligence, and perused with eagerness; and the student of every class may derive a lesson, or an example, from the lives most similar to his own. My name may hereafter be placed among the thousand articles of a Biographia Britannica; and I must be conscious that no one is so well qualified as myself to describe the series of my thoughts and actions. The authority of my masters, of the grave Thuanus, and the philosophic Hume, might be sufficient to justify my design; but it would not be difficult to produce a long list of ancients and moderns, who, in various forms, have exhibited their own portraits. Such portraits are often the most interesting, and sometimes the only interesting parts of their writings; and, if they be sincere, we seldom complain of the minuteness or prolixity of these personal memorials. The lives of the younger Pliny, of Petrarch, and of Erasmus are expressed in the epistles which they themselves have given to the world. The essays of Montaigne and Sir William Temple bring us home to the houses and bosoms of the authors: we smile without contempt at the headstrong passions of

[3] Nor less praiseworthy are the sisters three,
The honour of the noble familie,
Of which I meanest boast myself to be.
SPENCER, *Colin Clout, &c.*, v. 538.

Benvenuto Cellini, and the gay follies of Colley Cibber. The confessions of St. Austin and Rousseau disclose the secrets of the human heart; the commentaries of the learned Huet have survived his evangelical demonstration; and the memoirs of Goldoni are more truly dramatic than his Italian comedies. The heretic and the churchman are strongly marked in the characters and fortunes of Whiston and Bishop Newton; and even the dulness of Michael de Marolles and Anthony Wood acquires some value from the faithful representation of men and manners. That I am equal or superior to some of these, the effects of modesty or affectation cannot force me to dissemble.

My family is originally derived from the county of Kent. The southern district, which borders on Sussex and the sea, was formerly overspread with the great forest Anderida, and even now retains the denomination of the *Weald*, or Woodland. In this district, and in the hundred and parish of Rolvenden, the Gibbons were possessed of lands in the year one thousand three hundred and twenty-six; and the elder branch of the family, without much increase or diminution of property, still adheres to its native soil. Fourteen years after the first appearance of his name, John Gibbon is recorded as the Marmorarius or architect of King Edward the Third: the strong and stately castle of Queensborough, which guarded the entrance of the Medway, was a monument of his skill; and the grant of an hereditary toll on the passage from Sandwich to Stonar, in the Isle of Thanet, is the reward of no vulgar artist. In the visitations of the heralds the Gibbons are frequently mentioned: they held the rank of Esquire in an age when that title was less promiscuously assumed: one of them, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was captain of the militia of Kent; and a free school, in the neighbouring town of Benenden, proclaims the charity and opulence of its founder. But time, or their own obscurity, has cast a veil of oblivion over the virtues and vices of my Kentish ancestors; their character or station confined them to the labours and pleasures of a rural life: nor is it in my power to follow the advice of the poet, in an inquiry after a name—

> "Go! search it there, where to be born, and die,
> Of rich and poor makes all the history"—

so recent is the institution of our parish registers. In the beginning of the seventeenth century a younger branch of the Gibbons of Rolvenden migrated from the country to the city; and from this branch I do not blush to descend. The law requires some abilities; the church imposes some restraints; and before our army and navy,

our civil establishments, and India empire, had opened so many paths of fortune, the mercantile profession was more frequently chosen by youths of a liberal race and education, who aspired to create their own independence. Our most respectable families have not disdained the counting-house, or even the shop; their names are inrolled in the Livery and Companies of London; and in England, as well as in the Italian commonwealths, heralds have been compelled to declare, that gentility is not degraded by the exercise of trade.

The armorial ensigns which, in the times of chivalry, adorned the crest and shield of the soldier, are now become an empty decoration, which every man who has money to build a carriage may paint according to his fancy on the panels. My family arms are the same which were borne by the Gibbons of Kent in an age when the College of Heralds religiously guarded the distinctions of blood and name: a lion rampant gardant, between three schallop-shells Argent, on a field Azure.[4] I should not however have been tempted to blazon my coat of arms, were it not connected with a whimsical anecdote.—About the reign of James the First, the three harmless schallop-shells were changed by Edmund Gibbon, Esq., into three *Ogresses*, or female cannibals, with a design of stigmatizing three ladies, his kinswomen, who had provoked him by an unjust lawsuit. But this singular mode of revenge, for which he obtained the sanction of Sir William Seagar, king at arms, soon expired with its author; and, on his own monument in the Temple church, the monsters vanish, and the three schallop-shells resume their proper and hereditary place.

Our alliances by marriage it is not disgraceful to mention. The chief honour of my ancestry is James Fiens, Baron Say and Seale, and Lord High Treasurer of England in the reign of Henry the Sixth; from whom by the Phelips, the Whetnalls, and the Cromers, I am lineally descended in the eleventh degree. His dismission and imprisonment in the Tower were insufficient to appease the popular clamour; and the Treasurer, with his son-in-law Cromer, was beheaded (1450), after a mock trial, by the Kentish insurgents. The black list of his offences, as it is exhibited in Shakspeare, displays the ignorance and envy of a plebeian tyrant. Besides the vague reproaches of selling Maine and Normandy to the Dauphin, the Treasurer is specially accused of luxury, for riding on a foot-cloth, and of treason, for speaking French, the language of our enemies: "Thou hast most traiterously corrupted the youth of the realm," says Jack Cade to the unfortunate Lord, "in erecting a grammar-

[4] The father of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke married an heiress of this family of Gibbon. The Chancellor's escutcheon in the Temple Hall quarters the arms of Gibbon, as does also that, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, of Charles Yorke, Chancellor in 1770.—SHEFFIELD.

school; and whereas before, our forefathers had no other books than the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee who usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no christian ear can endure to hear." Our dramatic poet is generally more attentive to character than to history; and I much fear that the art of printing was not introduced into England till several years after Lord Say's death: but of some of these meritorious crimes I should hope to find my ancestor guilty; and a man of letters may be proud of his descent from a patron and martyr of learning.

In the beginning of the last century, Robert Gibbon, Esq., of Rolvenden in Kent[5] (who died in 1618), had a son of the same name of Robert, who settled in London and became a member of the Clothworkers' Company. His wife was a daughter of the Edgars, who flourished about four hundred years in the county of Suffolk, and produced an eminent and wealthy serjeant-at-law, Sir Gregory Edgar, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. Of the sons of Robert Gibbon (who died in 1643), Matthew did not aspire above the station of a linen-draper in Leadenhall-street; but John has given to the public some curious memorials of his existence, his character, and his family. He was born on the 3rd of November, in the year 1629; his education was liberal, at a grammar-school, and afterwards in Jesus College at Cambridge; and he celebrates the retired content which he enjoyed at Allesborough in Worcestershire, in the house of Thomas Lord Coventry, where he was employed as a domestic tutor. But the spirit of my kinsman soon immerged into more active life; he visited foreign countries as a soldier and a traveller; acquired the knowledge of the French and Spanish languages; passed some time in the isle of Jersey; crossed the Atlantic, and resided upwards of a twelvemonth (1659) in the rising colony of Virginia. In this remote province his taste, or rather passion, for heraldry found a singular gratification at a war-dance of the native Indians. As they moved in measured steps, brandishing their tomahawks, his curious eye contemplated their little shields of bark, and their naked bodies, which were painted with the colours and symbols of his favourite

[5] Robert Gibbon, my lineal ancestor in the fifth degree, was captain of the Kentish militia, and, as he died in the year 1618, it may be presumed that he had appeared in arms at the time of the Spanish invasion. His wife was Margaret Phillip[illegible] daughter of Edward Phillips de la Weld in Tenterden, and of Rose, his wife, daught[illegible] of George Whitnell, of East Peckham, Esquire. Peckham, the seat of the Whitne[illegible] of Kent, is mentioned, not indeed much to its honour, in the Mémoires du Comte [illegible] Grammont, a classic work, the delight of every man and woman of taste to whom [illegible] French language is familiar.

science. "At which (says he) I exceedingly wondered; and concluded that heraldry was ingrafted *naturally* into the sense of human race. If so, it deserves a greater esteem than now-a-days is put upon it." His return to England after the restoration was soon followed by his marriage—his settlement in a house in St. Catherine's Cloyster, near the Tower, which devolved to my grandfather—and his introduction into the Heralds' College (in 1671) by the style and title of Blue-mantle Pursuivant at Arms. In this office he enjoyed near fifty years the rare felicity of uniting, in the same pursuit, his duty and inclination: his name is remembered in the College, and many of his letters are still preserved. Several of the most respectable characters of the age, Sir William Dugdale, Mr. Ashmole, Dr. John Betts, and Dr. Nehemiah Grew, were his friends; and in the society of such men, John Gibbon may be recorded without disgrace as the member of an astrological club. The study of hereditary honours is favourable to the Royal prerogative; and my kinsman, like most of his family, was a high Tory both in church and state. In the latter end of the reign of Charles the Second his pen was exercised in the cause of the Duke of York: the Republican faction he most cordially detested; and as each animal is conscious of its proper arms, the herald's revenge was emblazoned on a most diabolical escutcheon. But the triumph of the Whig government checked the preferment of Blue-mantle; and he was even suspended from his office till his tongue could learn to pronounce the oath of abjuration. His life was prolonged to the age of ninety; and in the expectation of the inevitable though uncertain hour, he wishes to preserve the blessings of health, competence, and virtue. In the year 1682 he published at London his *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam*, an original attempt, which Camden had desiderated, to define, in a Roman idiom, the terms and attributes of a Gothic institution. It is not two years since I acquired, in a foreign land, some domestic intelligence of my own family; and this intelligence was conveyed to Switzerland from the heart of Germany. I had formed an acquaintance with Mr. *Langer*, a lively and ingenious scholar, while he resided at Lausanne as preceptor to the Hereditary Prince of *Brunswick*. On his return to his proper station of Librarian to the Ducal Library of Wolfenbuttel, he accidentally found among some literary rubbish a small old English volume of heraldry, inscribed with the name of *John Gibbon*. From the title only Mr. *Langer* judged that it might be an acceptable present to his friend; and he judged rightly. His manner is quaint and affected; his order is confused: but he displays some wit, more reading, and still more enthusiasm; and if an enthusiast be often absurd, he is never languid.

An English text is perpetually interspersed with Latin sentences in prose and verse; but in his own poetry he claims an exemption from the laws of prosody. Amidst a profusion of genealogical knowledge, my kinsman could not be forgetful of his own name; and to him I am indebted for almost the whole information concerning the Gibbon family.[6] From this small work (a duodecimo of one hundred and sixty-five pages) the author expected immortal fame; and, at the conclusion of his labour, he sings, in a strain of self-exultation:—

"Usque huc corrigitur Romana Blasonia per me;
Verborumque dehinc barbara forma cadat.
Hic liber, in meritum si forsitan incidet usum,
Testis ritè meæ sedulitatis erit:
Quicquid agat Zoilus, ventura fatebitur ætas
Artis quòd fueram non Clypearis inops."

Such are the hopes of authors! In the failure of those hopes John Gibbon has not been the first of his profession, and very possibly may not be the last of his name. His brother, Matthew Gibbon, the draper, had one daughter and two sons—my grandfather Edward, who was born in the year 1666, and Thomas, afterwards Dean of Carlisle. According to the mercantile creed, that the best book is a profitable ledger, the writings of John the herald would be much less precious than those of his nephew Edward: but an author professes at least to write for the public benefit; and the slow balance of trade can be pleasing to those persons only to whom it is advantageous. The successful industry of my grandfather raised him above the level of his immediate ancestors; he appears to have launched into various and extensive dealings: even his opinions were subordinate to his interest; and I find him in Flanders clothing King William's troops, while he would have contracted with more pleasure, though not perhaps at a cheaper rate, for the service of King James. During his residence abroad, his concerns at home were managed by his mother Hester, an active and notable woman. Her second husband was a widower of the name of Acton: they united the children of their first nuptials. After his marriage with the daughter of Richard Acton, goldsmith in Leadenhall-street, he gave his own sister to Sir Whitmore Acton, of Aldenham; and I am thus connected, by a triple alliance, with that ancient and loyal family of Shropshire baronets. It consisted about that time of seven brothers, all of gigantic stature; one of whom, a pigmy of six feet two inches, confessed himself the last and the least of the seven; adding, in the true spirit of party, that such men were not born since the Revolution. Under the Tory administration of the four last years of Queen Anne

[6] Mr. Gibbon seems, after this was written, to have collected much additional information respecting his family, as appears from a number of manuscripts in my possession.—SHEFFIELD.

(1710–1714), Mr. Edward Gibbon was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Customs; he sat at that Board with Prior: but the merchant was better qualified for his station than the poet; since Lord Bolingbroke has been heard to declare, that he had never conversed with a man who more clearly understood the commerce and finances of England. In the year 1716 he was elected one of the Directors of the South Sea Company; and his books exhibited the proof that, before his acceptance of this fatal office, he had acquired an independent fortune of sixty thousand pounds.

But his fortune was overwhelmed in the shipwreck of the year twenty, and the labours of thirty years were blasted in a single day. Of the use or abuse of the South Sea scheme, of the guilt or innocence of my grandfather and his brother Directors, I am neither a competent nor a disinterested judge. Yet the equity of modern times must condemn the violent and arbitrary proceedings, which would have disgraced the cause of justice, and would render injustice still more odious. No sooner had the nation awakened from its golden dream, than a popular and even a parliamentary clamour demanded their victims: but it was acknowledged on all sides that the South Sea Directors, however guilty, could not be touched by any known laws of the land. The speech of Lord Molesworth, the author of The State of Denmark, may show the temper, or rather the intemperance, of the House of Commons. "Extraordinary crimes (exclaimed that ardent Whig) call aloud for extraordinary remedies. The Roman lawgivers had not foreseen the possible existence of a parricide: but as soon as the first monster appeared, he was sown in a sack, and cast headlong into the river; and I shall be content to inflict the same treatment on the authors of our present ruin." His motion was not literally adopted; but a bill of pains and penalties was introduced, a retroactive statute, to punish the offences, which did not exist at the time they were committed. Such a pernicious violation of liberty and law can be excused only by the most imperious necessity; nor could it be defended on this occasion by the plea of impending danger or useful example. The legislature restrained the persons of the Directors, imposed an exorbitant security for their appearance, and marked their characters with a previous note of ignominy: they were compelled to deliver, upon oath, the strict value of their estates; and were disabled from making any transfer or alienation of any part of their property. Against a bill of pains and penalties it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his counsel at the bar; they prayed to be heard; their prayer was refused; and their oppressors, who required no evidence, would listen to no defence. It had been at first proposed that one-eighth of their

respective estates should be allowed for the future support of the Directors; but it was speciously urged, that, in the various shades of opulence and guilt, such an unequal proportion would be too light for many, and for some might possibly be too heavy. The character and conduct of each man were separately weighed; but, instead of the calm solemnity of a judicial inquiry, the fortune and honour of three and thirty Englishmen were made the topic of hasty conversation, the sport of a lawless majority; and the basest member of the committee, by a malicious word or a silent vote, might indulge his general spleen or personal animosity. Injury was aggravated by insult, and insult was embittered by pleasantry. Allowances of twenty pounds, or one shilling, were facetiously moved. A vague report that a Director had formerly been concerned in *another* project, by which some unknown persons had lost their money, was admitted as a proof of his actual guilt. One man was ruined because he had dropped a foolish speech, that his horses should feed upon gold; another because he was grown so proud, that, one day at the Treasury, he had refused a civil answer to persons much above him. All were condemned, absent and unheard, in arbitrary fines and forfeitures, which swept away the greatest part of their substance. Such bold oppression can scarcely be shielded by the omnipotence of parliament: and yet it may be seriously questioned whether the Judges of the South Sea Directors were the true and legal representatives of their country. The first parliament of George the First had been chosen (1715) for three years: the term had elapsed, their trust was expired; and the four additional years (1718–1722), during which they continued to sit, were derived not from the people, but from themselves; from the strong measure of the Septennial Bill, which can only be paralleled by *il serrar di consiglio* of the Venetian history.[7] Yet candour will own that to the same parliament every Englishman is deeply indebted: the Septennial Act, so vicious in its origin, has been sanctioned by time, experience, and the national consent. Its first operation secured the House of Hanover on the throne, and its permanent influence maintains the peace and stability of government. As often as a repeal has been moved in the House of Commons, I have given in its defence a clear and conscientious vote.

My grandfather could not expect to be treated with more lenity than his companions. His Tory principles and connections rendered him obnoxious to the ruling powers: his name is reported in a suspicious secret; and his well-known abilities could not plead the excuse of ignorance or error. In the first proceedings against the South Sea Directors, Mr. Gibbon is one of the few who were taken

[7] Compare Daru, Histoire de Venise, liv. vi., tom. i., p. 515, 520.

into custody; and, in the final sentence, the measure of his fine proclaims him eminently guilty. The total estimate which he delivered on oath to the House of Commons amounted to one hundred and six thousand five hundred and forty-three pounds, five shillings, and sixpence, exclusive of antecedent settlements. Two different allowances of fifteen and of ten thousand pounds were moved for Mr. Gibbon; but, on the question being put, it was carried without a division for the smaller sum. On these ruins, with the skill and credit of which Parliament had not been able to despoil him, my grandfather, at a mature age, erected the edifice of a new fortune: the labours of sixteen years were amply rewarded; and I have reason to believe that the second structure was not much inferior to the first. He had realized a very considerable property in Sussex, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, and the New River Company; and had acquired a spacious house,[8] with gardens and lands, at Putney, in Surrey, where he resided in decent hospitality. He died in December, 1736, at the age of seventy; and by his last will, at the expense of Edward, his only son (with whose marriage he was not perfectly reconciled), enriched his two daughters, Catherine and Hester. The former became the wife of Mr. Edward Elliston: their daughter and heiress, Catherine, was married in the year 1756 to Edward Eliot, Esq. (now Lord Eliot), of Port Eliot, in the county of Cornwall; and their three sons are my nearest male relations on the father's side. A life of devotion and celibacy was the choice of my aunt, Mrs. Hester Gibbon, who, at the age of eighty-five, still resides in a hermitage at Cliffe, in Northamptonshire, having long survived her spiritual guide and faithful companion, Mr. William Law, who, at an advanced age, about the year 1761, died in her house. In our family he had left the reputation of a worthy and pious man, who believed all that he professed, and practised all that he enjoined. The character of a nonjuror, which he maintained to the last, is a sufficient evidence of his principles in church and state; and the sacrifice of interest to conscience will be always respectable. His theological writings, which our domestic connection has tempted me to peruse, preserve an imperfect sort of life, and I can pronounce with more confidence and knowledge on the merits of the author. His last compositions are darkly tinctured by the incomprehensible visions of Jacob Behmen; and his discourse on the absolute unlawfulness of stage-entertainments is sometimes quoted

[8] Since inhabited by Mr. Wood, Sir John Shelley, the Duke of Norfolk, &c.—SHEFFIELD.[a]

[a] This house has since this time been occupied by Mr. Kensington the banker, and now by —— Fletcher, Esq.—M.

for a ridiculous intemperance of sentiment and language.—"The actors and spectators must all be damned: the playhouse is the porch of Hell, the place of the Devil's abode, where he holds his filthy court of evil spirits: a play is the Devil's triumph, a sacrifice performed to his glory, as much as in the heathen temples of Bacchus or Venus," &c. &c. But these sallies of religious frenzy must not extinguish the praise which is due to Mr. William Law as a wit and a scholar. His argument on topics of less absurdity is specious and acute, his manner is lively, his style forcible and clear; and, had not his vigorous mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times. While the Bangorian controversy was a fashionable theme, he entered the lists on the subject of Christ's kingdom, and the authority of the priesthood: against the plain account of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper he resumed the combat with Bishop Hoadley, the object of Whig idolatry and Tory abhorrence; and at every weapon of attack and defence, the nonjuror, on the ground which is common to both, approves himself at least equal to the prelate. On the appearance of the Fable of the Bees, he drew his pen against the licentious doctrine that private vices are public benefits, and morality as well as religion must join in his applause. Mr. Law's master-work, the *Serious Call*, is still read as a popular and powerful book of devotion. His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel: his satire is sharp, but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy of the pen of La Bruyere. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame; and a philosopher must allow that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world. Under the names of Flavia and Miranda he has admirably described my two aunts—the heathen and the Christian sister.[9]

My father, Edward Gibbon, was born in October, 1707: at the age of thirteen he could scarcely feel that he was disinherited by Act of Parliament; and, as he advanced towards manhood, new prospects of fortune opened to his view. A parent is most attentive to supply in his children the deficiencies of which he is conscious in himself: my grandfather's knowledge was derived from a strong understanding, and the experience of the ways of men; but my father enjoyed the benefits of a liberal education as a scholar and a gentleman. At

[9] Gibbon, on the whole, has been fair in his estimate of Law; but his admission that the asceticism of Law was founded on the gospel was biassed, no doubt, by his disinclination to allow genuine Christianity to have any claim to be considered as rational religion.—M.

Westminster School, and afterwards at Emanuel College in Cambridge, he passed through a regular course of academical discipline; and the care of his learning and morals was entrusted to his private tutor, the same Mr. William Law. But the mind of a saint is above or below the present world; and while the pupil proceeded on his travels, the tutor remained at Putney, the much-honoured friend and spiritual director of the whole family. My father resided some time at Paris to acquire the fashionable exercises; and as his temper was warm and social, he indulged in those pleasures for which the strictness of his former education had given him a keener relish. He afterwards visited several provinces of France; but his excursions were neither long nor remote; and the slender knowledge which he had gained of the French language was gradually obliterated. His passage through Besançon is marked by a singular consequence in the chain of human events. In a dangerous illness Mr. Gibbon was attended, at his own request, by one of his kinsmen of the name of Acton, the younger brother of a younger brother, who had applied himself to the study of physic. During the slow recovery of his patient the physician himself was attacked by the malady of love: he married his mistress, renounced his country and religion, settled at Besançon, and became the father of three sons; the eldest of whom, General Acton, is conspicuous in Europe as the principal Minister of the King of the Two Sicilies. By an uncle, whom another stroke of fortune had transplanted to Leghorn, he was educated in the naval service of the Emperor; and his valour and conduct in the command of the Tuscan frigates protected the retreat of the Spaniards from Algiers. On my father's return to England he was chosen, in the general election of 1734, to serve in Parliament for the borough of Petersfield; a burgage tenure, of which my grandfather possessed a weighty share, till he alienated (I know not why) such important property. In the opposition to Sir Robert Walpole and the Pelhams, prejudice and society connected his son with the Tories—shall I say Jacobites? or, as they were pleased to style themselves, the country gentlemen. With them he gave many a vote; with them he drank many a bottle. Without acquiring the fame of an orator or a statesman, he eagerly joined in the great opposition which, after a seven years' chase, hunted down Sir Robert Walpole: and, in the pursuit of an unpopular minister, he gratified a private revenge against the oppressor of his family in the South Sea persecution.

I was born at Putney, in the county of Surrey, the 27th of April, O.S., in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven; the

first child of the marriage of Edward Gibbon, Esq., and of Judith Porten.[10] My lot might have been that of a slave, a savage, or a peasant; nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of Nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilized country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honourable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune. From my birth I have enjoyed the right of primogeniture; but I was succeeded by five brothers and one sister, all of whom were snatched away in their infancy. My five brothers, whose names may be found in the parish register of Putney, I shall not pretend to lament: but from my childhood to the present hour I have deeply and sincerely regretted my sister, whose life was somewhat prolonged, and whom I remember to have seen an amiable infant. The relation of a brother and a sister, especially if they do not marry, appears to me of a very singular nature. It is a familiar and tender friendship with a female, much about our own age; an affection perhaps softened by the secret influence of sex, but pure from any mixture of sensual desire, the sole species of Platonic love that can be indulged with truth, and without danger.

At the general election of 1741 Mr. Gibbon and Mr. Delmé stood an expensive and successful contest at Southampton, against Mr. Dummer and Mr. Henly, afterwards Lord Chancellor and Earl of Northington. The Whig candidates had a majority of the resident voters; but the corporation was firm in the Tory interest: a sudden creation of one hundred and seventy new freemen turned the scale; and a supply was readily obtained of respectable volunteers, who flocked from all parts of England to support the cause of their political friends. The new parliament opened with the victory of an opposition which was fortified by strong clamour and strange coalitions. From the event of the first divisions, Sir Robert Walpole perceived that he could no longer lead a majority in the House of Commons, and prudently resigned (after a dominion of one and twenty years) the guidance of the state (1742). But the fall of an unpopular minister was not succeeded, according to general expectation, by a millennium of happiness and virtue: some courtiers lost their places, some patriots lost their characters, Lord Orford's offences vanished with his power; and after a short vibration, the Pelham government was fixed on the old basis of the Whig aristocracy. In

[10] The union to which I owe my birth was a marriage of inclination and esteem. Mr. James Porten, a merchant of London, resided with his family at Putney, in a house adjoining to the bridge and churchyard, where I have passed many happy hours of my childhood. He left one son (the late Sir Stanier Porten) and three daughters: Catherine, who preserved her maiden name, and of whom I shall hereafter speak; another daughter married Mr. Darrel, of Richmond, and left two sons, Edward and Robert; the youngest of the three sisters was Judith, my mother.

the year 1745 the throne and the constitution were attacked by a rebellion which does not reflect much honour on the national spirit; since the English friends of the Pretender wanted courage to join his standard, and his enemies (the bulk of the people) allowed him to advance into the heart of the kingdom. Without daring, perhaps without desiring, to aid the rebels, my father invariably adhered to the Tory opposition. In the most critical season he accepted, for the service of the party, the office of alderman in the city of London: but the duties were so repugnant to his inclination and habits, that he resigned his gown at the end of a few months. The second parliament in which he sate was prematurely dissolved (1747): and as he was unable or unwilling to maintain a second contest for Southampton, the life of the senator expired in that dissolution.

The death of a new-born child before that of its parents may seem an unnatural, but it is strictly a probable event: since of any given number the greater part are extinguished before their ninth year, before they possess the faculties of the mind or body. Without accusing the profuse waste or imperfect workmanship of Nature, I shall only observe, that this unfavourable chance was multiplied against my infant existence. So feeble was my constitution, so precarious my life, that, in the baptism of my brothers, my father's prudence successively repeated my christian name of Edward, that, in case of the departure of the eldest son, this patronymic appellation might be still perpetuated in the family.

— Uno avulso non deficit alter.

To preserve and to rear so frail a being, the most tender assiduity was scarcely sufficient; and my mother's attention was somewhat diverted by her frequent pregnancies, by an exclusive passion for her husband, and by the dissipation of the world, in which his taste and authority obliged her to mingle. But the maternal office was supplied by my aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten; at whose name I feel a tear of gratitude trickling down my cheek. A life of celibacy transferred her vacant affection to her sister's first child: my weakness excited her pity; her attachment was fortified by labour and success: and if there be any, as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted. Many anxious and solitary days did she consume in the patient trial of every mode of relief and amusement. Many wakeful nights did she sit by my bedside in trembling expectation that each hour would be my last. Of the various and frequent disorders of my childhood my own recollection is dark; nor do I wish to ex-

patiate on so disgusting a topic. Suffice it to say, that while every practitioner, from Sloane and Ward to the Chevalier Taylor,[2] was successively summoned to torture or relieve me, the care of my mind was too frequently neglected for that of my health: compassion always suggested an excuse for the indulgence of the master, or the idleness of the pupil; and the chain of my education was broken as often as I was recalled from the school of learning to the bed of sickness.

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As soon as the use of speech had prepared my infant reason for the admission of knowledge, I was taught the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. So remote is the date, so vague is the memory of their origin in myself, that, were not the error corrected by analogy, I should be tempted to conceive them as innate. In my childhood I was praised for the readiness with which I could multiply and divide, by memory alone, two sums of several figures: such praise encouraged my growing talent; and had I persevered in this line of application, I might have acquired some fame in mathematical studies.

After this previous institution at home, or at a day-school at Putney, I was delivered at the age of seven into the hands of Mr. John Kirkby, who exercised about eighteen months the office of my domestic tutor. His own words, which I shall here transcribe, inspire in his favour a sentiment of pity and esteem.—"During my abode in my native county of Cumberland, in quality of an indigent curate, I used now and then in a summer, when the pleasantness of the season invited, to take a solitary walk to the sea-shore, which lies about two miles from the town where I lived. Here I would amuse myself, one while in viewing at large the agreeable prospect which surrounded me, and another while (confining my sight to nearer objects) in admiring the vast variety of beautiful shells thrown upon the beach; some of the choicest of which I always picked up, to divert my little ones upon my return. One time among the rest, taking such a journey in my head, I sat down upon the declivity of the beach with my face to the sea, which was now come up within a few yards of my feet; when immediately the sad thought of the wretched condition of my family, and the unsuccessfulness of all endeavours to amend it, came crowding into my mind, which drove

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[2] A quack oculist, on whom Horace Walpole wrote the following epigram:—

"Why Taylor the quack calls himself Chevalier,
'Tis not easy a reason to render;
Unless he would own, what his practice makes clear,
That at best he is but a Pretender."

The Pretender went by the name of the Chevalier St. George. Letters to Sir Horace Mann, vol. iii. p. 348.—M.

me into a deep melancholy, and ever and anon forced tears from my eyes." Distress at last forced him to leave the country. His learning and virtue introduced him to my father; and at Putney he might have found at least a temporary shelter, had not an act of indiscretion again driven him into the world. One day, reading prayers in the parish church, he most unluckily forgot the name of King George: his patron, a loyal subject, dismissed him with some reluctance and a decent reward; and *how* the poor man ended his days I have never been able to learn. Mr. John Kirkby is the author of two small volumes; the Life of Automathes (London, 1745), and an English and Latin Grammar (London, 1746), which, as a testimony of gratitude, he dedicated (November 5th, 1745) to my father. The books are before me: from them the pupil may judge the preceptor; and, upon the whole, his judgment will not be unfavourable. The grammar is executed with accuracy and skill, and I know not whether any better existed at the time in our language: but the Life of Automathes aspires to the honours of a philosophical fiction. It is the story of a youth, the son of a shipwrecked exile, who lives alone on a desert island from infancy to the age of manhood. A hind is his nurse; he inherits a cottage, with many useful and curious instruments; some ideas remain of the education of his two first years; some arts are borrowed from the beavers of a neighbouring lake; some truths are revealed in supernatural visions. With these helps, and his own industry, Automathes becomes a self-taught though speechless philosopher, who had investigated with success his own mind, the natural world, the abstract sciences, and the great principles of morality and religion. The author is not entitled to the merit of invention, since he has blended the English story of Robinson Crusoe with the Arabian romance of Hai Ebn Yokhdan, which he might have read in the Latin version of Pocock. In the Automathes I cannot praise either the depth of thought or elegance of style; but the book is not devoid of entertainment or instruction; and among several interesting passages, I would select the discovery of fire, which produces by accidental mischief the discovery of conscience. A man who had thought so much on the subjects of language and education was surely no ordinary preceptor: my childish years, and his hasty departure, prevented me from enjoying the full benefit of his lessons; but they enlarged my knowledge of arithmetic, and left me a clear impression of the English and Latin rudiments.

In my ninth year (January, 1746), in a lucid interval of comparative health, my father adopted the convenient and customary mode of English education; and I was sent to Kingston-upon-Thames, to a school of about seventy boys, which was kept by Dr. Woodde-

son and his assistants. Every time I have since passed over Putney Common, I have always noticed the spot where my mother, as we drove along in the coach, admonished me that I was now going into the world, and must learn to think and act for myself. The expression may appear ludicrous; yet there is not, in the course of life, a more remarkable change than the removal of a child from the luxury and freedom of a wealthy house to the frugal diet and strict subordination of a school; from the tenderness of parents, and the obsequiousness of servants, to the rude familiarity of his equals, the insolent tyranny of his seniors, and the rod, perhaps, of a cruel and capricious pedagogue. Such hardships may steel the mind and body against the injuries of fortune; but my timid reserve was astonished by the crowd and tumult of the school; the want of strength and activity disqualified me for the sports of the play-field; nor have I forgotten how often in the year forty-six I was reviled and buffeted for the sins of my Tory ancestors. By the common methods of discipline, at the expense of many tears and some blood, I purchased the knowledge of the Latin syntax: and not long since I was possessed of the dirty volumes of Phædrus and Cornelius Nepos, which I painfully construed and darkly understood. The choice of these authors is not injudicious. The *Lives* of Cornelius Nepos, the friend of Atticus and Cicero, are composed in the style of the purest age: his simplicity is elegant, his brevity copious: he exhibits a series of men and manners; and with such illustrations as every pedant is not indeed qualified to give, this classic biographer may initiate a young student in the history of Greece and Rome. The use of fables or apologues has been approved in every age from ancient India to modern Europe. They convey in familiar images the truths of morality and prudence; and the most childish understanding (I advert to the scruples of Rousseau) will not suppose either that beasts *do* speak, or that men *may* lie. A fable represents the genuine characters of animals; and a skilful master might extract from Pliny and Buffon some pleasing lessons of natural history, a science well adapted to the taste and capacity of children. The Latinity of Phædrus is not exempt from an alloy of the silver age; but his manner is concise, terse, and sententious: the Thracian slave discreetly breathes the spirit of a freeman; and when the text is sound, the style is perspicuous. But his fables, after a long oblivion, were first published by Peter Pithou, from a corrupt manuscript. The labours of fifty editors confess the defects of the copy, as well as the value of the original; and the schoolboy may have been whipped for misapprehending a passage which Bentley could not restore, and which Burman could not explain.

My studies were too frequently interrupted by sickness; and after a real or nominal residence at Kingston school of near two years, I was finally recalled (December, 1747) by my mother's death, which was occasioned, in her thirty-eighth year, by the consequences of her last labour. I was too young to feel the importance of my loss; and the image of her person and conversation is faintly imprinted in my memory. The affectionate heart of my aunt, Catherine Porten, bewailed a sister and a friend; but my poor father was inconsolable, and the transport of grief seemed to threaten his life or his reason. I can never forget the scene of our first interview, some weeks after the fatal event; the awful silence, the room hung with black, the mid-day tapers, his sighs and tears; his praises of my mother, a saint in heaven; his solemn adjuration that I would cherish her memory and imitate her virtues; and the fervour with which he kissed and blessed me as the sole surviving pledge of their loves. The storm of passion insensibly subsided into calmer melancholy. At a convivial meeting of his friends, Mr. Gibbon might affect or enjoy a gleam of cheerfulness; but his plan of happiness was for ever destroyed: and after the loss of his companion he was left alone in a world, of which the business and pleasures were to him irksome or insipid. After some unsuccessful trials he renounced the tumult of London and the hospitality of Putney, and buried himself in the rural or rather rustic solitude of Buriton; from which, during several years, he seldom emerged.

As far back as I can remember, the house, near Putney-bridge and churchyard, of my maternal grandfather, appears in the light of my proper and native home. It was there that I was allowed to spend the greatest part of my time, in sickness or in health, during my school vacations and my parents' residence in London, and finally after my mother's death. Three months after that event, in the spring of 1748, the commercial ruin of her father, Mr. James Porten, was accomplished and declared. As his effects were not sold, nor the house evacuated, till the Christmas following, I enjoyed during the whole year the society of my aunt, without much consciousness of her impending fate. I feel a melancholy pleasure in repeating my obligations to that excellent woman, Mrs. Catherine Porten, the true mother of my mind as well as of my health. Her natural good sense was improved by the perusal of the best books in the English language; and if her reason was sometimes clouded by prejudice, her sentiments were never disguised by hypocrisy or affectation. Her indulgent tenderness, the frankness of her temper, and my innate rising curiosity, soon removed all distance between us: like friends of an equal age, we freely conversed on every topic, familiar or abstruse;

and it was her delight and reward to observe the first shoots of my young ideas. Pain and languor were often soothed by the voice of instruction and amusement; and to her kind lessons I ascribe my early and invincible love of reading, which I would not exchange for the treasures of India. I should perhaps be astonished, were it possible to ascertain the date at which a favourite tale was engraved, by frequent repetition, in my memory: the Cavern of the Winds; the Palace of Felicity; and the fatal moment, at the end of three months or centuries, when Prince Adolphus is overtaken by Time, who had worn out so many pair of wings in the pursuit. Before I left Kingston school I was well acquainted with Pope's Homer and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, two books which will always please by the moving picture of human manners and specious miracles: nor was I then capable of discerning that Pope's translation is a portrait endowed with every merit excepting that of likeness to the original. The verses of Pope accustomed my ear to the sound of poetic harmony: in the death of Hector, and the shipwreck of Ulysses, I tasted the new emotions of terror and pity; and seriously disputed with my aunt on the vices and virtues of the heroes of the Trojan war. From Pope's Homer to Dryden's Virgil was an easy transition; but I know not how, from some fault in the author, the translator, or the reader, the pious Æneas did not so forcibly seize on my imagination; and I derived more pleasure from Ovid's Metamorphoses, especially in the fall of Phaëton, and the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses. My grandfather's flight unlocked the door of a tolerable library; and I turned over many English pages of poetry and romance, of history and travels. Where a title attracted my eye, without fear or awe I snatched the volume from the shelf; and Mrs. Porten, who indulged herself in moral and religious speculations, was more prone to encourage than to check a curiosity above the strength of a boy. This year (1748), the twelfth of my age, I shall note as the most propitious to the growth of my intellectual stature.

The relics of my grandfather's fortune afforded a bare annuity for his own maintenance; and his daughter, my worthy aunt, who had already passed her fortieth year, was left destitute. Her noble spirit scorned a life of obligation and dependence; and after revolving several schemes, she preferred the humble industry of keeping a boarding-house for Westminster-school,[3] where she laboriously earned a competence for her old age. This singular opportunity of blending

[3] It is said in the family that she was principally induced to this undertaking by her affection for her nephew, whose weak constitution required her constant and unremitted attention.—SHEFFIELD.

the advantages of private and public education decided my father. After the Christmas holidays, in January, 1749, I accompanied Mrs. Porten to her new house in College-street; and was immediately entered in the school, of which Dr. John Nicoll was at that time head-master. At first I was alone: but my aunt's resolution was praised; her character was esteemed; her friends were numerous and active: in the course of some years she became the mother of forty or fifty boys, for the most part of family and fortune; and as her primitive habitation was too narrow, she built and occupied a spacious mansion in Dean's Yard. I shall always be ready to join in the common opinion, that our public schools, which have produced so many eminent characters, are the best adapted to the genius and constitution of the English people. A boy of spirit may acquire a previous and practical experience of the world; and his playfellows may be the future friends of his heart or his interest. In a free intercourse with his equals, the habits of truth, fortitude, and prudence will insensibly be matured. Birth and riches are measured by the standard of personal merit; and the mimic scene of a rebellion has displayed in their true colours the ministers and patriots of the rising generation. Our seminaries of learning do not exactly correspond with the precept of a Spartan king, "that the child should be instructed in the arts which will be useful to the man;" since a finished scholar may emerge from the head of Westminster or Eton in total ignorance of the business and conversation of English gentlemen in the latter end of the eighteenth century. But these schools may assume the merit of teaching all that they pretend to teach, the Latin and Greek languages: they deposit in the hands of a disciple the keys of two valuable chests; nor can he complain if they are afterwards lost or neglected by his own fault. The necessity of leading in equal ranks so many unequal powers of capacity and application will prolong to eight or ten years the juvenile studies which might be dispatched in half that time by the skilful master of a single pupil. Yet even the repetition of exercise and discipline contributes to fix in a vacant mind the verbal science of grammar and prosody; and the private or voluntary student, who possesses the sense and spirit of the classics, may offend, by a false quantity, the scrupulous ear of a well-flogged critic. For myself, I must be content with a very small share of the civil and literary fruits of a public school. In the space of two years (1749, 1750), interrupted by danger and debility, I painfully climbed into the third form; and my riper age was left to acquire the beauties of the Latin, and the rudiments of the Greek tongue. Instead of audaciously mingling in the sports, the quarrels, and the connections of our little world, I

was still cherished at home under the maternal wing of my aunt; and my removal from Westminster long preceded the approach of manhood.

The violence and variety of my complaints, which had excused my frequent absence from Westminster-school, at length engaged Mrs. Porten, with the advice of physicians, to conduct me to Bath: at the end of the Michaelmas vacation (1750) she quitted me with reluctance, and I remained several months under the care of a trusty maid-servant. A strange nervous affection, which alternately contracted my legs, and produced, without any visible symptoms, the most excruciating pain, was ineffectually opposed by the various methods of bathing and pumping. From Bath I was transported to Winchester, to the house of a physician; and after the failure of his medical skill, we had again recourse to the virtues of the Bath waters. During the intervals of these fits I moved with my father to Buriton and Putney; and a short unsuccessful trial was attempted to renew my attendance at Westminster-school. But my infirmities could not be reconciled with the hours and discipline of a public seminary; and instead of a domestic tutor, who might have watched the favourable moments, and gently advanced the progress of my learning, my father was too easily content with such occasional teachers as the different places of my residence could supply. I was never forced, and seldom was I persuaded, to admit these lessons: yet I read with a clergyman at Bath some odes of Horace, and several episodes of Virgil, which gave me an imperfect and transient enjoyment of the Latin poets. It might now be apprehended that I should continue for life an illiterate cripple: but, as I approached my sixteenth year, Nature displayed in my favour her mysterious energies: my constitution was fortified and fixed; and my disorders, instead of growing with my growth and strengthening with my strength, most wonderfully vanished. I have never possessed or abused the insolence of health: but since that time few persons have been more exempt from real or imaginary ills; and, till I am admonished by the gout, the reader will no more be troubled with the history of my bodily complaints. My unexpected recovery again encouraged the hope of my education; and I was placed at Esher, in Surrey, in the house of the Reverend Mr. Philip Francis, in a pleasant spot, which promised to unite the various benefits of air, exercise, and study (January, 1752). The translator of Horace might have taught me to relish the Latin poets, had not my friends discovered in a few weeks that he preferred the pleasures of London to the instruction of his pupils. My father's perplexity at this time, rather than his prudence, was urged to embrace a singular and

desperate measure. Without preparation or delay he carried me to Oxford; and I was matriculated in the university as a gentleman-commoner of Magdalen college before I had accomplished the fifteenth year of my age (April 3, 1752).

The curiosity which had been implanted in my infant mind was still alive and active; but my reason was not sufficiently informed to understand the value, or to lament the loss, of three precious years from my entrance at Westminster to my admission at Oxford. Instead of repining at my long and frequent confinement to the chamber or the couch, I secretly rejoiced in those infirmities, which delivered me from the exercises of the school and the society of my equals. As often as I was tolerably exempt from danger and pain, reading, free desultory reading, was the employment and comfort of my solitary hours. At Westminster, my aunt sought only to amuse and indulge me; in my stations at Bath and Winchester, at Buriton and Putney, a false compassion respected my sufferings; and I was allowed, without control or advice, to gratify the wanderings of an unripe taste. My indiscriminate appetite subsided by degrees in the *historic* line: and since philosophy has exploded all innate ideas and natural propensities, I must ascribe this choice to the assiduous perusal of the Universal History, as the octavo volumes successively appeared. This unequal work, and a treatise of Hearne, the *Ductor historicus*, referred and introduced me to the Greek and Roman historians, to as many at least as were accessible to an English reader. All that I could find were greedily devoured, from Littlebury's lame Herodotus, and Spelman's valuable Xenophon, to the pompous folios of Gordon's Tacitus, and a ragged Procopius of the beginning of the last century. The cheap acquisition of so much knowledge confirmed my dislike to the study of languages; and I argued with Mrs. Porten, that, were I master of Greek and Latin, I must interpret to myself in English the thoughts of the original, and that such extemporary versions must be inferior to the elaborate translations of professed scholars; a silly sophism, which could not easily be confuted by a person ignorant of any other language than her own. From the ancient I leaped to the modern world: many crude lumps of Speed, Rapin, Mezeray, Davila, Machiavel, Father Paul, Bower, &c., I devoured like so many novels; and I swallowed with the same voracious appetite the descriptions of India and China, of Mexico and Peru.

My first introduction to the historic scenes which have since engaged so many years of my life must be ascribed to an accident. In the summer of 1751 I accompanied my father on a visit to Mr. Hoare's, in Wiltshire; but I was less delighted with the beauties

of Stourhead than with discovering in the library a common book, the Continuation of Echard's Roman History, which is indeed executed with more skill and taste than the previous work. To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine were absolutely new; and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast. This transient glance served rather to irritate than to appease my curiosity; and as soon as I returned to Bath I procured the second and third volumes of Howel's History of the World, which exhibit the Byzantine period on a larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my attention; and some instinct of criticism directed me to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley, an original in every sense, first opened my eyes; and I was led from one book to another, till I had ranged round the circle of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks; and the same ardour urged me to guess at the French of d'Herbelot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock's Abulfaragius. Such vague and multifarious reading could not teach me to think, to write, or to act; and the only principle that darted a ray of light into the indigested chaos was an early and rational application to the order of time and place. The maps of Cellarius and Wells imprinted in my mind the picture of ancient geography: from Stranchius I imbibed the elements of chronology: the Tables of Helvicus and Anderson, the Annals of Usher and Prideaux, distinguished the connection of events, and engraved the multitude of names and dates in a clear and indelible series. But in the discussion of the first ages I overleaped the bounds of modesty and use. In my childish balance I presumed to weigh the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton, which I could seldom study in the originals; and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation. I arrived at Oxford with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed.

At the conclusion of this first period of my life I am tempted to enter a protest against the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years, which is echoed with so much affectation in the world. That happiness I have never known, that time I have never regretted; and were my poor aunt still alive, she would bear testimony to the early and constant uniformity of my sentiments. It wil indeed be replied that *I* am not a competent judge; that pleasure is incompatible with pain; that joy is excluded from sickness; and that the felicity of a schoolboy consists in the perpetual motion of

thoughtless and playful agility, in which I was never qualified to excel. My name, it is most true, could never be enrolled among the sprightly race, the idle progeny of Eton or Westminster,

> "Who foremost might delight to cleave,
> With pliant arm, the glassy wave,
> Or urge the flying ball."

The poet may gaily describe the short hours of recreation; but he forgets the daily tedious labours of the school, which is approached each morning with anxious and reluctant steps.

A TRAVELLER who visits Oxford or Cambridge is surprised and edified by the apparent order and tranquillity that prevail in the seats of the English muses. In the most celebrated universities of Holland, Germany, and Italy, the students, who swarm from different countries, are loosely dispersed in private lodgings at the houses of the burghers: they dress according to their fancy and fortune; and in the intemperate quarrels of youth and wine, their *swords*, though less frequently than of old, are sometimes stained with each other's blood. The use of arms is banished from our English universities; the uniform habit of the academics, the square cap and black gown, is adapted to the civil and even clerical profession; and from the doctor in divinity to the undergraduate, the degrees of learning and age are externally distinguished. Instead of being scattered in a town, the students of Oxford and Cambridge are united in colleges; their maintenance is provided at their own expense, or that of the founders; and the stated hours of the hall and chapel represent the discipline of a regular, and, as it were, a religious community. The eyes of the traveller are attracted by the size or beauty of the public edifices: and the principal colleges appear to be so many palaces, which a liberal nation has erected and endowed for the habitation of science. My own introduction to the university of Oxford forms a new æra in my life; and at the distance of forty years I still remember my first emotions of surprise and satisfaction. In my fifteenth year I felt myself suddenly raised from a boy to a man: the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown which distinguish a gentleman-commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a schoolboy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command, among the tradesmen of Oxford, an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands, which gave me the free use of a

numerous and learned library: my apartment consisted of three elegant and well-furnished rooms in the new building, a stately pile, of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance (April 3, 1752) into the university of Oxford.

A venerable prelate, whose taste and erudition must reflect honour on the society in which they were formed, has drawn a very interesting picture of his academical life.—"I was educated (says Bishop Lowth) in the UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. I enjoyed all the advantages, both public and private, which that famous seat of learning so largely affords. I spent many years in that illustrious society, in a well-regulated course of useful discipline and studies, and in the agreeable and improving commerce of gentlemen and of scholars; in a society where emulation without envy, ambition without jealousy, contention without animosity, incited industry, and awakened genius; where a liberal pursuit of knowledge, and a genuine freedom of thought, was raised, encouraged, and pushed forward by example, by commendation, and by authority. I breathed the same atmosphere that the HOOKERS, the CHILLINGWORTHS, and the LOCKES had breathed before; whose benevolence and humanity were as extensive as their vast genius and comprehensive knowledge; who always treated their adversaries with civility and respect; who made candour, moderation, and liberal judgment as much the rule and law as the subject of their discourse. And do you reproach me with my education in this place, and with my relation to this most respectable body, which I shall always esteem my greatest advantage and my highest honour?"[4] I transcribe with pleasure this eloquent passage, without examining what benefits or what rewards were derived by Hooker, or Chillingworth, or Locke, from their academical institution; without inquiring whether in this angry controversy the spirit of Lowth himself is purified from the intolerant zeal which Warburton had ascribed to the genius of the place. It may indeed be observed that the atmosphere of Oxford did not agree with Mr. Locke's constitution, and that the philosopher justly despised the academical bigots who expelled his person and condemned his principles.[5]

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[4] From the celebrated Letter to the Right Rev. Author of the Divine Legation, page 64.—M.

[5] The subject of the expulsion of Locke has been set at rest by the publication of the late Chancellor of Oxford; who, anxious as he might be to uphold the character of the University, would have disdained the attainment even of this object by the slightest compromise of truth and justice. The disgraceful act was not that of the University, but of the servile Head of a College in obedience to an arbitrary Court. See Lord Grenville, Oxford and Locke.—M.

The expression of gratitude is a virtue and a pleasure: a liberal mind will delight to cherish and celebrate the memory of its parents; and the teachers of science are the parents of the mind. I applaud the filial piety which it is impossible for me to imitate; since I must not confess an imaginary debt, to assume the merit of a just or generous retribution. To the university of Oxford *I* acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life: the reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar, but I cannot affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The specious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure, may doubtless be alleged; nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application; even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-constituted academy, under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors, I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science: my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness, which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

Perhaps in a separate annotation I may coolly examine the fabulous and real antiquities of our sister universities, a question which has kindled such fierce and foolish disputes among their fanatic sons. In the mean while it will be acknowledged that these venerable bodies are sufficiently old to partake of all the prejudices and infirmities of age. The schools of Oxford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science; and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks; and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy. The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of the public instruction; and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear

of a rival, and below the confession of an error. We may scarcely hope that any reformation will be a voluntary act; and so deeply are they rooted in law and prejudice, that even the omnipotence of parliament would shrink from an inquiry into the state and abuses of the two universities.

The use of academical degrees, as old as the thirteenth century, is visibly borrowed from the mechanic corporations; in which an apprentice, after serving his time, obtains a testimonial of his skill, and a licence to practise his trade and mystery. It is not my design to depreciate those honours, which could never gratify or disappoint my ambition; and I should applaud the institution, if the degrees of bachelor or licentiate were bestowed as the reward of manly and successful study: if the name and rank of doctor or master were strictly reserved for the professors of science who have approved their title to the public esteem.

In all the universities of Europe, excepting our own, the languages and sciences are distributed among a numerous list of effective professors; the students, according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence, apply themselves to the proper masters; and in the annual repetition of public and private lectures, these masters are assiduously employed. Our curiosity may inquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford? (for I shall now confine myself to my own university;) by whom are they appointed, and what may be the probable chances of merit or incapacity? how many are stationed to the three faculties, and how many are left for the liberal arts? what is the form, and what the substance, of their lessons? But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer, "That in the university of Oxford the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching." Incredible as the fact may appear, I must rest my belief on the positive and impartial evidence of a master of moral and political wisdom, who had himself resided at Oxford. Dr. Adam Smith assigns as the cause of their indolence, that, instead of being paid by voluntary contributions, which would urge them to increase the number, and to deserve the gratitude of their pupils, the Oxford professors are secure in the enjoyment of a fixed stipend, without the necessity of labour, or the apprehension of control. It has indeed been observed, nor is the observation absurd, that, excepting in experimental sciences, which demand a costly apparatus and a dexterous hand, the many valuable treatises that have been published on every subject of learning may now supersede the ancient mode of oral instruction. Were this principle true in its utmost latitude, I should only infer that the offices and salaries which are become

useless ought without delay to be abolished. But there still remains a material difference between a book and a professor; the hour of the lecture enforces attendance; attention is fixed by the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher; the most idle will carry something away; and the more diligent will compare the instructions which they have heard in the school with the volumes which they peruse in their chamber. The advice of a skilful professor will adapt a course of reading to every mind and every situation; his authority will discover, admonish, and at last chastise the negligence of his disciples; and his vigilant inquiries will ascertain the steps of their literary progress. Whatever science he professes he may illustrate in a series of discourses, composed in the leisure of his closet, pronounced on public occasions, and finally delivered to the press. I observe with pleasure, that in the university of Oxford Dr. Lowth, with equal eloquence and erudition, has executed this task in his incomparable *Prælectiones* on the Poetry of the Hebrews.

The college of St. Mary Magdalen was founded in the fifteenth century by Wainfleet, Bishop of Winchester; and now consists of a president, forty fellows, and a number of inferior students. It is esteemed one of the largest and most wealthy of our academical corporations, which may be compared to the Benedictine abbeys of catholic countries; and I have loosely heard that the estates belonging to Magdalen College, which are leased by those indulgent landlords at small quit-rents and occasional fines, might be raised, in the hands of private avarice, to an annual revenue of nearly thirty thousand pounds. Our colleges are supposed to be schools of science, as well as of education; nor is it unreasonable to expect that a body of literary men, devoted to a life of celibacy, exempt from the care of their own subsistence, and amply provided with books, should devote their leisure to the prosecution of study, and that some effects of their studies should be manifested to the world. The shelves of their library groan under the weight of the Benedictine folios, of the editions of the fathers, and the collections of the middle ages, which have issued from the single abbey of St. Germain de Préz at Paris. A composition of genius must be the offspring of one mind; but such works of industry as may be divided among many hands, and must be continued during many years, are the peculiar province of a laborious community. If I inquire into the manufactures of the monks of Magdalen, if I extend the inquiry to the other colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, a silent blush, or a scornful frown, will be the only reply. The fellows or monks of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder: their days were

filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman-commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth: and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover. A general election was now approaching: the great Oxfordshire contest already blazed with all the malevolence of party zeal. Magdalen College was devoutly attached to the old interest! and the names of Wenman and Dashwood were more frequently pronounced than those of Cicero and Chrysostom. The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the undergraduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation; and I cannot describe, as I never knew, the discipline of college. Some duties, may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars, whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honours of a fellowship (*ascribi quietis ordinibus . . . . Deorum*); but no independent members were admitted below the rank of a gentleman-commoner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty. A tradition prevailed that some of our predecessors had spoken Latin declamations in the hall; but of this ancient custom no vestige remained: the obvious methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown; and I have never heard that either the president or the society interfered in the private economy of the tutors and their pupils.

The silence of the Oxford professors, which deprives the youth of public instruction, is imperfectly supplied by the tutors, as they are styled, of the several colleges. Instead of confining themselves to a single science, which had satisfied the ambition of Burman or Bernouilli, they teach, or promise to teach, either history, or mathematics, or ancient literature, or moral philosophy; and as it is possible that they may be defective in all, it is highly probable that of some they will be ignorant. They are paid, indeed, by private contributions; but their appointment depends on the head of the house: their diligence is voluntary, and will consequently be languid, while the pupils themselves, or their parents, are not indulged in the liberty of choice or change. The first tutor into whose hands I was resigned appears to have been one of the best of the tribe: Dr. Waldegrave was a

learned and pious man, of a mild disposition, strict morals, and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or the jollity of the college. But his knowledge of the world was confined to the university; his learning was of the last, rather than of the present age; his temper was indolent; his faculties, which were not of the first rate, had been relaxed by the climate, and he was satisfied, like his fellows, with the slight and superficial discharge of an important trust. As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his disciple in school-learning, he proposed that we should read every morning, from ten to eleven, the comedies of Terence. The sum of my improvement in the university of Oxford is confined to three or four Latin plays; and even the study of an elegant classic, which might have been illustrated by a comparison of ancient and modern theatres, was reduced to a dry and literal interpretation of the author's text. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence: the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and, at the most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse without labour or amusement, without advice or account. I should have listened to the voice of reason and of my tutor; his mild behaviour had gained my confidence. I preferred his society to that of the younger students;[6] and in our evening walks to the top of Heddington-hill we freely conversed on a variety of subjects. Since the days of Pocock and Hyde, Oriental learning has always been the pride of Oxford, and I once expressed an inclination to study Arabic. His prudence discouraged this childish fancy; but he neglected the fair occasion of directing the ardour of a curious mind. During my absence in the summer vacation Dr. Waldegrave[7] accepted a college living at

[6] Mr. Finden, an ancient Fellow of Magdalen College, and a contemporary of Gibbon, told me that his superior abilities were known to many, but that the gentlemen-commoners, of which number Gibbon was one, were disposed to laugh at his peculiarities; and were once informed by Finden, rather coarsely, but with some humour, that, if their heads were entirely scooped, Gibbon had brains sufficient to supply them all.—From the learned and excellent president of Magdalen College, Dr. Routh.—M.

[7] Dr. Waldegrave, the virtuous and learned friend of Gibbon, is reported to have said, when he heard of his embracing

Washington in Sussex, and on my return I no longer found him at Oxford. From that time I have lost sight of my first tutor; but at the end of thirty years (1781) he was still alive; and the practice of exercise and temperance had entitled him to a healthy old age.

The long recess between the Trinity and Michaelmas terms empties the colleges of Oxford, as well as the courts of Westminster. I spent at my father's house at Buriton in Hampshire the two months of August and September. It is whimsical enough, that as soon as I left Magdalen College my taste for books began to revive;[8] but it was the same blind and boyish taste for the pursuit of exotic history. Unprovided with original learning, unformed in the habits of thinking, unskilled in the arts of composition, I resolved—to write a book. The title of this first essay, *The Age of Sesostris*, was perhaps suggested by Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV., which was new and popular; but my sole object was to investigate the probable date of the life and reign of the conqueror of Asia. I was then enamoured of Sir John Marsham's Canon Chronicus;[9] an elaborate work, of whose merits and defects I was not yet qualified to judge. According to his specious though narrow plan, I settled my hero about the time of Solomon, in the tenth century before the Christian æra. It was therefore incumbent on me, unless I would adopt Sir Isaac Newton's shorter chronology, to remove a formidable objection; and my solution, for a youth of fifteen, is not devoid of ingenuity. In his version of the Sacred Books, Manetho the high priest has identified Sethosis, or Sesostris, with the elder brother of Danaus, who landed in Greece, according to the Parian Marble, fifteen hundred and ten years before Christ. But in my supposition the high priest is guilty of a voluntary error: flattery is the prolific parent of falsehood. Manetho's history of Egypt[1] is dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus,

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the Roman Catholic religion, that he should rather have thought he would have turned Mahometan; alluding to his fondness for perusing the Arabic historians in the Latin translations.—Traditionary anecdote, communicated by the learned president of Magdalen College.—M.

It is odd enough that, at a later period of his life, when Boswell observed that Gibbon, having changed his religion so often, might end in "a methodist preacher," Johnson said, laughing, "It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been a Mahometan."—See Mr. Croker's note, Boswell, iii. 336.—M.

[8] Old Daniel Parker, the bookseller at Oxford, gives us a few traits of Gibbon when at College. "I knew him personally. He was a singular character, and but little connected with the young gentlemen of his college. They admit at Magdalen College only men of fortune—no commoners. One uncommon book for a young man I remember selling to him—La Bibliothèque Orientale d'Herbelot, which he seems much to have used for authorities for his Eastern Roman History." Gent. Mag., vol. lxiv. p. 119.—M.

[9] Perhaps the chronological part of Sir John Marsham's work is that which least maintains his fame; but there are many historical observations in this learned volume of remarkable acuteness and ingenuity.—M.

[1] The history of Manetho has latterly

who derived a fabulous or illegitimate pedigree from the Macedonian kings of the race of Hercules. Danaus is the ancestor of Hercules; and after the failure of the elder branch, his descendants, the Ptolemies, are the sole representatives of the royal family, and may claim by inheritance the kingdom which they hold by conquest. Such were my juvenile discoveries; at a riper age I no longer presume to connect the Greek, the Jewish, and the Egyptian antiquities, which are lost in a distant cloud. Nor is this the only instance in which the belief and knowledge of the child are superseded by the more rational ignorance of the man. During my stay at Buriton my infant labour was diligently prosecuted, without much interruption from company or country diversions; and I already heard the music of public applause. The discovery of my own weakness was the first symptom of taste. On my return to Oxford the Age of Sesostris was wisely relinquished; but the imperfect sheets remained twenty years at the bottom of a drawer, till, in a general clearance of papers (November 1772), they were committed to the flames.

After the departure of Dr. Waldegrave I was transferred, with his other pupils, to his academical heir, whose literary character did not command the respect of the college. Dr. **** [2] well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform. Instead of guiding the studies, and watching over the behaviour of his disciple, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and, excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other. The want of experience, of advice, and of occupation soon betrayed me into some improprieties of conduct, ill-chosen company, late hours, and inconsiderate expense. My growing debts might be secret; but my frequent absence was visible and scandalous: and a tour to Bath, a visit into Buckinghamshire, and four excursions to London in the same winter, were costly and dangerous frolics. They were indeed without a meaning, as without an excuse. The irksomeness of a cloistered life repeatedly tempted me to wander; but my chief pleasure was that of travelling; and I was too young and bashful to enjoy, like a Manly Oxonian in Town, the pleasures of London. In all these excursions I eloped from Oxford; I returned to college; in a few days I eloped again, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, without once hearing the voice of admonition, without

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assumed new importance, as apparently coinciding, at least to a certain extent, with the monumental history developed by Champollion and his followers.—M.

[2] I have not considered it right to insert this name, which Gibbon thought proper to suppress.—M.

once feeling the hand of control. Yet my time was lost, my expenses were multiplied, my behaviour abroad was unknown; folly as well as vice should have awakened the attention of my superiors, and my tender years would have justified a more than ordinary degree of restraint and discipline.

It might at least be expected that an ecclesiastical school should inculcate the orthodox principles of religion. But our venerable mother had contrived to unite the opposite extremes of bigotry and indifference; an heretic, or unbeliever, was a monster in her eyes, but she was always, or often, or sometimes, remiss in the spiritual education of her own children. According to the statutes of the university, every student, before he is matriculated, must subscribe his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of the church of England, which are signed by more than read, and read by more than believe them. My insufficient age excused me, however, from the immediate performance of this legal ceremony; and the vice-chancellor directed me to return as soon as I should have accomplished my fifteenth year; recommending me, in the mean while, to the instruction of my college. My college forgot to instruct; I forgot to return, and was myself forgotten by the first magistrate of the university. Without a single lecture, either public or private, either christian or protestant, without any academical subscription, without any episcopal confirmation, I was left by the dim light of my catechism to grope my way to the chapel and communion-table, where I was admitted, without a question how far, or by what means, I might be qualified to receive the sacrament. Such almost incredible neglect was productive of the worst mischiefs. From my childhood I had been fond of religious disputation: my poor aunt has been often puzzled by the mysteries which she strove to believe; nor had the elastic spring been totally broken by the weight of the atmosphere of Oxford. The blind activity of idleness urged me to advance without armour into the dangerous mazes of controversy; and, at the age of sixteen, I bewildered myself in the errors of the church of Rome.

The progress of my conversion may tend to illustrate at least the history of my own mind. It was not long since Dr. Middleton's free inquiry had sounded an alarm in the theological world: much ink and much gall had been spilt in the defence of the primitive miracles; and the two dullest of their champions were crowned with academic honours by the university of Oxford. The name of Middleton was unpopular; and his proscription very naturally led me to peruse his writings, and those of his antagonists.[3] His bold criticism, which

[3] Dr. Dodwell and Dr. Church. See Vindication of Free Inquiry, in Middleton's Works, vol. i. p. 190.—M.

approaches the precipice of infidelity, produced on my mind a singular effect; and had I persevered in the communion of Rome, I should now apply to my own fortune the prediction of the Sibyl,

—— Via prima salutis,
Quod minimè reris, Graiâ pandetur ab urbe.

The elegance of style and freedom of argument were repelled by a shield of prejudice. I still revered the character, or rather the names, of the saints and fathers whom Dr. Middleton exposes; nor could he destroy my implicit belief that the gift of miraculous powers was continued in the church during the first four or five centuries of christianity. But I was unable to resist the weight of historical evidence, that within the same period most of the leading doctrines of popery were already introduced in theory and practice: nor was my conclusion absurd, that miracles are the test of truth, and that the church must be orthodox and pure which was so often approved by the visible interposition of the Deity. The marvellous tales which are so boldly attested by the Basils and Chrysostoms, the Austins and Jeroms, compelled me to embrace the superior merits of celibacy, the institution of the monastic life, the use of the sign of the cross, of holy oil, and even of images, the invocation of saints, the worship of relics, the rudiments of purgatory in prayers for the dead, and the tremendous mystery of the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which insensibly swelled into the prodigy of transubstantiation. In these dispositions, and already more than half a convert, I formed an unlucky intimacy with a young gentleman of our college. With a character less resolute, Mr. Molesworth had imbibed the same religious opinions; and some popish books, I know not through what channel, were conveyed into his possession. I read, I applauded, I believed: the English translations of two famous works of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine, and the History of the Protestant Variations, achieved my conversion, and I surely fell by a noble hand.[4] I have since examined the originals with a more discerning eye, and shall not hesitate to pronounce that Bossuet is indeed a master of all the weapons of controversy. In the Exposition, a specious apology, the orator assumes, with consummate art, the tone of candour and sim-

[4] Mr. Gibbon never talked with me on the subject of his conversion to popery but once: and then he imputed his change to the works of Parsons the jesuit,[a] who lived in the reign of Elizabeth, and who, he said, had urged all the best arguments in favour of the Roman catholic religion.—SHEFFIELD.

[a] These were probably Mr. Molesworth's books. The style, singularly clear and vivid, as well as the arguments, of Father Parsons, were likely to attract the attention and captivate the admiration of Gibbon.—M.

plicity; and the ten-horned monster is transformed, at his magic touch, into the milk-white hind, who must be loved as soon as she is seen. In the History, a bold and well-aimed attack, he displays, with a happy mixture of narrative and argument, the faults and follies, the changes and contradictions of our first reformers; whose variations (as he dexterously contends) are the mark of historical error, while the perpetual unity of the catholic church is the sign and test of infallible truth. To my present feelings it seems incredible that I should ever believe that I believed in transubstantiation. But my conqueror oppressed me with the sacramental words, "Hoc est corpus meum," and dashed against each other the figurative half-meanings of the protestant sects: every objection was resolved into omnipotence; and after repeating at St. Mary's the Athanasian creed, I humbly acquiesced in the mystery of the real presence.

> "To take up half on trust, and half to try,
> Name it not faith, but bungling bigotry.
> Both knave and fool the merchant we may call,
> To pay great sums, and to compound the small,
> For who would break with Heaven, and would not break for all?" [5]

No sooner had I settled my new religion than I resolved to profess myself a catholic. Youth is sincere and impetuous; and a momentary glow of enthusiasm had raised me above all temporal considerations.[6]

By the keen protestants, who would gladly retaliate the example of persecution, a clamour is raised of the increase of popery: and they are always loud to declaim against the toleration of priests and jesuits who pervert so many of his majesty's subjects from their religion and allegiance. On the present occasion, the fall of one or more of her sons directed this clamour against the university; and it was confidently affirmed that popish missionaries were suffered, under various disguises, to introduce themselves into the colleges of Oxford. But justice obliges me to declare that, as far as relates to myself, this assertion is false; and that I never conversed with a priest, or even with a papist, till my resolution from books was absolutely fixed. In my last excursion to London I addressed myself to Mr. Lewis, a Roman catholic bookseller in Russell-street, Covent Garden, who recommended me to a priest, of whose name and order I am at present ignorant.[7] In our first interview he soon discovered that persuasion

[5] Dryden, 'Hind and Panther,' i. 141.

[6] He described the letter to his father, announcing his conversion, as written with all the pomp, the dignity, and self-satisfaction of a martyr.—SHEFFIELD.

[7] His name was Baker, a jesuit, and one of the chaplains of the Sardinian ambassador. Mr. Gibbon's conversion made some noise; and Mr. Lewis, the Roman catholic bookseller of Russell-street, Covent Garden, was summoned before the Privy Council, and interrogated on the subject. This was communicated by Mr. Lewis's son, 1814.—SHEFFIELD.

was needless. After sounding the motives and merits of my conversion, he consented to admit me into the pale of the church; and at his feet on the 8th of June, 1753, I solemnly, though privately, abjured the errors of heresy. The seduction of an English youth of family and fortune was an act of as much danger as glory; but he bravely overlooked the danger, of which I was not then sufficiently informed. "Where a person is reconciled to the see of Rome, or procures others to be reconciled, the offence (says Blackstone) amounts to high treason." And if the humanity of the age would prevent the execution of this sanguinary statute, there were other laws of a less odious cast, which condemned the priest to perpetual imprisonment, and transferred the proselyte's estate to his nearest relation. An elaborate controversial epistle, approved by my director, and addressed to my father, announced and justified the step which I had taken. My father was neither a bigot nor a philosopher; but his affection deplored the loss of an only son; and his good sense was astonished at my strange departure from the religion of my country. In the first sally of passion he divulged a secret which prudence might have suppressed, and the gates of Magdalen College were for ever shut against my return. Many years afterwards, when the name of Gibbon was become as notorious as that of Middleton, it was industriously whispered at Oxford that the historian had formerly "turned papist;" my character stood exposed to the reproach of inconstancy; and this invidious topic would have been handled without mercy by my opponents, could they have separated my cause from that of the university. For my own part, I am proud of an honest sacrifice of interest to conscience. I can never blush if my tender mind was entangled in the sophistry that seduced the acute and manly understandings of CHILLINGWORTH and BAYLE, who afterwards emerged from superstition to scepticism.

While Charles the First governed England, and was himself governed by a catholic queen, it cannot be denied that the missionaries of Rome laboured with impunity and success in the court, the country, and even the universities. One of the sheep,

> —— Whom the grim wolf with privy paw
> Daily devours apace, and nothing said,

is Mr. William Chillingworth, Master of Arts, and Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford; who, at the ripe age of twenty-eight years, was persuaded to elope from Oxford, to the English seminary at Douay in Flanders. Some disputes with Fisher, a subtle jesuit, might first awaken him from the prejudices of education; but he yielded to his own victorious argument, "that there must be somewhere an infallible judge; and that the church of Rome is the only christian society

which either does or can pretend to that character." After a short trial of a few months Mr. Chillingworth was again tormented by religious scruples: he returned home, resumed his studies, unravelled his mistakes, and delivered his mind from the yoke of authority and superstition. His new creed was built on the principle that the Bible is our sole judge, and private reason our sole interpreter: and he ably maintains this principle in the Religion of a Protestant, a book which, after startling the doctors of Oxford, is still esteemed the most solid defence of the Reformation. The learning, the virtue, the recent merits of the author, entitled him to fair preferment: but the slave had now broken his fetters; and the more he weighed, the less was he disposed to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles of the church of England. In a private letter he declares, with all the energy of language, that he could not subscribe to them without subscribing to his own damnation; and that, if ever he should depart from this immoveable resolution, he would allow his friends to think him a madman, or an atheist. As the letter is without a date, we cannot ascertain the number of weeks or months that elapsed between this passionate abhorrence and the Salisbury Register, which is still extant. "Ego Gulielmus Chillingworth, ... omnibus hisce articulis, ... et singulis in iisdem contentis, volens et ex animo subscribo, et consensum meum iisdem præbeo. 20 die Julii 1638." But, alas! the chancellor and prebendary of Sarum soon deviated from his own subscription: as he more deeply scrutinised the article of the Trinity, neither scripture nor the primitive fathers could long uphold his orthodox belief; and he could not but confess "that the doctrine of Arius is either a truth, or at least no damnable heresy." From this middle region of the air, the descent of his reason would naturally rest on the firmer ground of the Socinians: and if we may credit a doubtful story, and the popular opinion, his anxious inquiries at last subsided in philosophic indifference. So conspicuous, however, were the candour of his nature and the innocence of his heart, that this apparent levity did not affect the reputation of Chillingworth. His frequent changes proceeded from too nice an inquisition into truth. His doubts grew out of himself; he assisted them with all the strength of his reason: he was then too hard for himself; but finding as little quiet and repose in those victories, he quickly recovered, by a new appeal to his own judgment: so that in all his sallies and retreats he was in fact his own convert.

Bayle was the son of a Calvinist minister in a remote province in France, at the foot of the Pyrenees. For the benefit of education, the protestants were tempted to risk their children in the catholic universities; and in the twenty-second year of his age young Bayle

was seduced by the arts and arguments of the jesuits of Thoulouse. He remained about seventeen months (19th March 1699—19th August 1670) in their hands, a voluntary captive; and a letter to his parents, which the new convert composed or subscribed (15th April 1670), is darkly tinged with the spirit of popery. But nature had designed him to think as he pleased, and to speak as he thought: his piety was offended by the excessive worship of creatures; and the study of physics convinced him of the impossibility of transubstantiation, which is abundantly refuted by the testimony of our senses. His return to the communion of a falling sect was a bold and disinterested step, that exposed him to the rigour of the laws; and a speedy flight to Geneva protected him from the resentment of his spiritual tyrants, unconscious, as they were, of the full value of the prize which they had lost. Had Bayle adhered to the catholic church, had he embraced the ecclesiastical profession, the genius and favour of such a proselyte might have aspired to wealth and honours in his native country: but the hypocrite would have found less happiness in the comforts of a benefice, or the dignity of a mitre, than he enjoyed at Rotterdam in a private state of exile, indigence, and freedom. Without a country, or a patron, or a prejudice, he claimed the liberty, and subsisted by the labours, of his pen: the inequality of his voluminous works is explained and excused by his alternately writing for himself, for the booksellers, and for posterity; and if a severe critic would reduce him to a single folio, that relic, like the books of the Sibyl, would become still more valuable. A calm and lofty spectator of the religious tempest, the philosopher of Rotterdam condemned with equal firmness the persecution of Louis the Fourteenth, and the republican maxims of the Calvinists; their vain prophecies, and the intolerant bigotry which sometimes vexed his solitary retreat. In reviewing the controversies of the times, he turned against each other the arguments of the disputants; successively wielding the arms of the catholics and protestants, he proves that neither the way of authority nor the way of examination can afford the multitude any test of religious truth; and dexterously concludes that custom and education must be the sole grounds of popular belief. The ancient paradox of Plutarch, that atheism is less pernicious than superstition, acquires a tenfold vigour when it is adorned with the colours of his wit, and pointed with the acuteness of his logic. His critical dictionary is a vast repository of facts and opinions; and he balances the *false* religions in his sceptical scales, till the opposite quantities (if I may use the language of algebra) annihilate each other. The wonderful power which he so boldly exercised, of assembling doubts and objections, had tempted him

jocosely to assume the title of the νεφελογερέτα Ζεύς, the cloud-compelling Jove; and in a conversation with the ingenious Abbé (afterwards Cardinal) de Polignac, he freely disclosed his universal Pyrrhonism. "I am most truly (said Bayle) a protestant; for I protest indifferently against all systems and all sects."[8]

The academical resentment which I may possibly have provoked will prudently spare this plain narrative of my studies, or rather of my idleness; and of the unfortunate event which shortened the term of my residence at Oxford. But it may be suggested that my father was unlucky in the choice of a society, and the chance of a tutor. It will perhaps be asserted, that in the lapse of forty years many improvements have taken place in the college and in the university. I am not unwilling to believe that some tutors might have been found more active than Dr. Waldegrave and less contemptible than Dr. * * * *. At a more recent period many students have been attracted by the merit and reputation of Sir William Scott, then a tutor in University College, and now conspicuous in the profession of the civil law: my personal acquaintance with that gentleman has inspired me with a just esteem for his abilities and knowledge; and I am assured that his lectures on history would compose, were they given to the public, a most valuable treatise.[9] Under the auspices of the late Deans, a more regular discipline has been introduced, as I am told, at Christ Church; a course of classical and philosophical studies is proposed, and even pursued, in that numerous seminary: learning has been made a duty, a pleasure, and even a fashion; and several young gentlemen do honour to the college in which they have been educated. According to the will of the donor, the profit of the second part of Lord Clarendon's History has been applied to the establishment of a riding-school, that the polite exercises might be taught, I know not with what success, in the university.[1] The

[8] Compare with this the clever character of Bayle in the Essai sur la Littérature du xviiime Siècle, by M. de Barante.—M.

[9] These lectures were left, on the decease of Sir W. Scott (Lord Stowell), in an imperfect state, with a strict injunction against their publication. By the friendly confidence of Lord Sidmouth, one of Lord Stowell's executors, I have been permitted to read these papers. From the extraordinary progress which has been recently made in the study of Grecian antiquities by the scholars of Germany, the lectures which relate to those subjects would be found, perhaps, not quite to rise to the level of modern knowledge; but in all there are passages which, for originality of thought, masculine good sense, and exquisite felicity of language, make me regret the sentence which has been passed upon them by the reserve or the diffidence of the author. One lecture in particular, containing a more general view of society, struck me as a masterpiece of composition, and as an example of English prose, peculiar indeed, and characteristic of the writer; but in purity, terseness, and a kind of sententious vigour, rarely equalled, perhaps not surpassed, in the whole range of our literature.—M.

[1] See the advertisement to Lord Clarendon's 'Religion and Policy,' published at the Clarendon Press, 1811. It appears that the property is vested in certain

Vinerian professorship is of far more serious importance; the laws of his country are the first science of an Englishman of rank and fortune, who is called to be a magistrate, and may hope to be a legislator. This judicious institution was coldly entertained by the graver doctors, who complained (I have heard the complaint) that it would take the young people from their books; but Mr. Viner's benefaction is not unprofitable, since it has at least produced the excellent commentaries of Sir William Blackstone.

After carrying me to Putney, to the house of his friend Mr. Mallet,[2] by whose philosophy I was rather scandalized than reclaimed, it was necessary for my father to form a new plan of education, and to devise some method which, if possible, might effect the cure of my spiritual malady. After much debate it was determined, from the advice and personal experience of Mr. Eliot (now Lord Eliot), to fix me, during some years, at Lausanne in Switzerland. Mr. Frey, a Swiss gentleman of Basil, undertook the conduct of the journey: we left London the 19th of June, crossed the sea from Dover to Calais, travelled post through several provinces of France, by the direct road of St. Quentin, Rheims, Langres, and Besançon, and arrived the 30th of June at Lausanne, where I was immediately settled under the roof and tuition of Mr. Pavilliard, a Calvinist minister.

The first marks of my father's displeasure rather astonished than afflicted me: when he threatened to banish, and disown, and disinherit a rebellious son, I cherished a secret hope that he would not be able or willing to effect his menaces; and the pride of conscience encouraged me to sustain the honourable and important part which I was now acting.[3] My spirits were raised and kept alive by the

[2] The author of a Life of Bacon, which has been rated above its value; of some forgotten poems and plays; and of the pathetic ballad of William and Margaret. His tenets were deistical; perhaps a stronger term might have been used.—SHEFFIELD.

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trustees, who have probably found it impracticable to carry the intentions of the testator into effect. If, as I am informed, the riding-school depends in the least on the sale of the 'Religion and Policy,' the university is not likely soon to obtain instruction in that useful and manly exercise.—M.

[3] "The son of an English protestant "gentleman must, at all events, be cured "of popery. For this purpose the "method employed by his father, who "appears to have been a capricious and "ill-judging man, resembles the un- "skilful process in medicine by which a "painful disorder, after being dislodged "from the extremities, is thrown upon "the vital parts. Young Gibbon was "placed under the care of Mallet, the "publisher of the works of Bolingbroke, "a deist at best, but probably something "more, and worse. Now, this was "'worshipful society.' But the young "man, still adhering with the pertinacity "of a confessor to his catholic principles, "was, after some months, removed into "the family of a Swiss minister, where "he beheld Christianity under a third "modification, poor, and gloomy, and "squalid, devoid of what he accounted

rapid motion of my journey, the new and various scenes of the Continent, and the civility of Mr. Frey, a man of sense, who was not ignorant of books or the world. But after he had resigned me into Pavilliard's hands, and I was fixed in my new habitation, I had leisure to contemplate the strange and melancholy prospect before me. My first complaint arose from my ignorance of the language. In my childhood I had once studied the French grammar, and I could imperfectly understand the easy prose of a familiar subject. But when I was thus suddenly cast on a foreign land, I found myself deprived of the use of speech and of hearing; and, during some weeks, incapable not only of enjoying the pleasures of conversation, but even of asking or answering a question in the common intercourse of life. To a home-bred Englishman every object, every custom was offensive; but the native of any country might have been disgusted with the general aspect of his lodging and entertainment. I had now exchanged my elegant apartment in Magdalen College, for a narrow, gloomy street, the most unfrequented of an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber ill-contrived and ill-furnished, which on the approach of winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull invisible heat of a stove. From a man I was again degraded to the dependence of a schoolboy. Mr. Pavilliard managed my expenses, which had been reduced to a diminutive state: I received a small monthly allowance for my pocket-money; and, helpless and awkward as I have ever been, I no longer enjoyed the indispensable comfort of a servant. My condition seemed as destitute of hope as it was devoid of pleasure: I was separated for an indefinite, which appeared an infinite term, from my native country; and I had lost all connection with my catholic friends. I have since reflected with surprise, that, as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith. Such was my first introduction to Lausanne; a place where I spent nearly five years with pleasure and profit, which I afterwards revisited without compulsion, and which I have finally selected as the most grateful retreat for the decline of my life.

But it is the peculiar felicity of youth that the most unpleasing objects and events seldom make a deep or lasting impression; it forgets the past, enjoys the present, and anticipates the future. At

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"the decent and gentlemanly indifference of the church of England, or the "gorgeous and imposing exterior of that "of Rome."—Whitaker (the historian of Craven), in Quarterly Review, vol. xii. p. 377.—M.

the flexible age of sixteen I soon learned to endure, and gradually to adopt, the new forms of arbitrary manners: the real hardships of my situation were alienated by time. Had I been sent abroad in a more splendid style, such as the fortune and bounty of my father might have supplied, I might have returned home with the same stock of language and science which our countrymen usually import from the Continent. An exile and a prisoner as I was, their example betrayed me into some irregularities of wine, of play, and of idle excursions: but I soon felt the impossibility of associating with them on equal terms; and after the departure of my first acquaintance, I held a cold and civil correspondence with their successors. This seclusion from English society was attended with the most solid benefits. In the *Pays de Vaud* the French language is used with less imperfection than in most of the distant provinces of France: in Pavilliard's family necessity compelled me to listen and to speak; and if I was at first disheartened by the apparent slowness, in a few months I was astonished by the rapidity of my progress. My pronunciation was formed by the constant repetition of the same sounds; the variety of words and idioms, the rules of grammar, and distinctions of genders, were impressed in my memory: ease and freedom were obtained by practice; correctness and elegance by labour; and before I was recalled home, French, in which I spontaneously thought, was more familiar than English to my ear, my tongue, and my pen. The first effect of this opening knowledge was the revival of my love of reading, which had been chilled at Oxford; and I soon turned over, without much choice, almost all the French books in my tutor's library. Even these amusements were productive of real advantage: my taste and judgment were now somewhat riper. I was introduced to a new mode of style and literature; by the comparison of manners and opinions, my views were enlarged, my prejudices were corrected, and a copious voluntary abstract of the *Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire*, by le Sueur,[4] may be placed in a middle line between my childish and my manly studies. As soon as I was able to converse with the natives, I began to feel some satisfaction in their company: my awkward timidity was polished and emboldened; and I frequented for the first time assemblies of men and women. The acquaintance of the Pavilliards prepared me by degrees for more elegant society. I was received with kindness and indulgence in the best families of

[4] Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire, &c. &c., par Jean le Sueur, à Genève, 1674. The first edition was in 4to., the second in 8 vols. 12mo. It was reprinted, with a continuation by Benedict Pictet, in 1730-2.—Le Sueur was a protestant; the work was not of very high pretensions, nor of merit exceeding its pretensions. It was, I believe, the common church history of the French protestant clergy in Switzerland.—M.

Lausanne; and it was in one of these that I formed an intimate and lasting connection with Mr. Deyverdun, a young man of an amiable temper and excellent understanding. In the arts of fencing and dancing, small indeed was my proficiency; and some months were idly wasted in the riding-school. My unfitness to bodily exercise reconciled me to a sedentary life, and the horse, the favourite of my countrymen, never contributed to the pleasures of my youth.

My obligations to the lessons of Mr. Pavilliard gratitude will not suffer me to forget: he was endowed with a clear head and a warm heart; his innate benevolence had assuaged the spirit of the church; he was rational, because he was moderate: in the course of his studies he had acquired a just though superficial knowledge of most branches of literature; by long practice he was skilled in the arts of teaching; and he laboured with assiduous patience to know the character, gain the affection, and open the mind of his English pupil. As soon as we began to understand each other, he gently led me, from a blind and undistinguishing love of reading, into the path of instruction. I consented with pleasure that a portion of the morning hours should be consecrated to a plan of modern history and geography, and to the critical perusal of the French and Latin classics: and at each step I felt myself invigorated by the habits of application and method. His prudence repressed and dissembled some youthful sallies; and as soon as I was confirmed in the habits of industry and temperance, he gave the reins into my own hands. His favourable report of my behaviour and progress gradually obtained some latitude of action and expense; and he wished to alleviate the hardships of my lodging and entertainment. The principles of philosophy were associated with the examples of taste; and by a singular chance, the book, as well as the man, which contributed the most effectually to my education, has a stronger claim on my gratitude than on my admiration. Mr. De Crousaz, the adversary of Bayle and Pope, is not distinguished by lively fancy or profound reflection; and even in his own country, at the end of a few years, his name and writings are almost obliterated. But his philosophy had been formed in the school of Locke, his divinity in that of Limborch and Le Clerc; in a long and laborious life, several generations of pupils were taught to think, and even to write; his lessons rescued the academy of Lausanne from Calvinistic prejudice; and he had the rare merit of diffusing a more liberal spirit among the clergy and people of the Pays de Vaud. His system of logic, which in the last editions has swelled to six tedious and prolix volumes, may be praised as a clear and methodical abridgment of the art of reasoning, from our simple ideas to the most complex operations of the human understanding. This system I

studied, and meditated, and abstracted, till I obtained the free command of an universal instrument, which I soon presumed to exercise on my catholic opinions. Pavilliard was not unmindful that his first task, his most important duty, was to reclaim me from the errors of popery. The intermixture of sects has rendered the Swiss clergy acute and learned on the topics of controversy; and I have some of his letters in which he celebrates the dexterity of his attack, and my gradual concessions, after a firm and well-managed defence.[5] I was willing, and I am now willing, to allow him a handsome share of the honour of my conversion: yet I must observe that it was principally effected by my private reflections; and I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a philosophical argument against the doctrine of transubstantiation: *that* the text of scripture, which seems to inculcate the real presence, is attested only by a single sense—our sight; while the real presence itself is disproved by three of our senses—the sight, the touch, and the taste. The various articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream; and after a full conviction, on Christmas-day 1754, I received the sacrament in the church of Lausanne. It was here that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries which are adopted by the general consent of catholics and protestants.

Such, from my arrival at Lausanne, during the first eighteen or twenty months (July 1753—March 1755), were my useful studies, the foundation of all my future improvements. But every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself. He will not, like the fanatics of the last age, define the moment of grace; but he cannot forget the æra of his life in which his mind has expanded to its proper form and dimensions. My worthy tutor had the good sense and modesty to discern how far he could be useful: as soon as he felt that I advanced beyond his speed and measure, he wisely left me to my genius; and the hours of lesson were soon lost in the voluntary labour of the whole morning, and sometimes of the whole day. The desire of prolonging my time gradually confirmed the salutary habit of early rising, to which I have always adhered, with some regard to seasons and situations: but it is happy for my eyes and my health that my temperate ardour has never been seduced to trespass on the hours of the night. During the last three years of my residence at Lausanne I may assume the

[5] M. Pavilliard has described to me the astonishment with which he gazed on Mr. Gibbon standing before him: a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favour of popery. Mr. Gibbon many years ago became very fat and corpulent, but he had uncommonly small bones, and was very slightly made.—SHEFFIELD.

merit of serious and solid application; but I am tempted to distinguish the last eight months of the year 1755 as the period of the most extraordinary diligence and rapid progress.[6] In my French and Latin translations I adopted an excellent method, which, from my own success, I would recommend to the imitation of students. I chose some classic writer, such as Cicero and Vertot, the most approved for purity and elegance of style. I translated, for instance, an epistle of Cicero into French; and, after throwing it aside till the words and phrases were obliterated from my memory, I re-translated my French into such Latin as I could find, and then compared each sentence of my imperfect version with the ease, the grace, the propriety of the Roman orator. A similar experiment was made on several pages of the Revolutions of Vertot; I turned them into Latin, returned them after a sufficient interval into my own French, and again scrutinized the resemblance or dissimilitude of the copy and the original. By degrees I was less ashamed, by degrees I was more satisfied with myself; and I persevered in the practice of these double translations, which filled several books, till I had acquired the knowledge of both idioms, and the command at least of a correct style. This useful exercise of writing was accompanied and succeeded by the more pleasing occupation of reading the best authors. The perusal of the Roman classics was at once my exercise and reward. Dr. Middleton's History,[7] which I then appreciated above its true value, naturally directed me to the writings of Cicero. The most perfect editions, that of Olivet, which may adorn the shelves of the rich, that of Ernesti, which should lie on the table of the learned, were not within my reach. For the familiar epistles I used the text and English commentary of Bishop Ross; but my general edition was that of Verburgius, published at Amsterdam in two large volumes in folio, with an indifferent choice of various notes. I read, with

[6] Journal, December 1755.—In finishing this year, I must remark how favourable it was to my studies. In the space of eight months, from the beginning of April, I learnt the principles of drawing; made myself complete master of the French and Latin languages, with which I was very superficially acquainted before, and wrote and translated a great deal in both; read Cicero's Epistles ad Familiares, his Brutus, all his Orations, his Dialogues de Amicitiâ and de Senectute; Terence, twice; and Pliny's Epistles. In French, Giannone's History of Naples, and l'Abbé Bannier's Mythology, and M. de Beehat's Mémoires sur la Suisse, and wrote a very ample relation of my tour. I likewise began to study Greek, and went through the grammar. I began to make very large collections of what I read. But what I esteem most of all, from the perusal and meditation of De Crousaz's Logic, I not only understood the principles of that science, but formed my mind to a habit of thinking and reasoning I had no idea of before.

[7] The irremediable defect of Middleton's work, which from its finished style will continue probably to occupy this favoured ground, is, that it is grounded so much on those epistles which modern criticism rejects with unhesitating confidence.—M.

application and pleasure, *all* the epistles, *all* the orations, and the most important treatises of rhetoric and philosophy; and as I read, I applauded the observation of Quintilian, that every student may judge of his own proficiency by the satisfaction which he receives from the Roman orator. I tasted the beauties of language, I breathed the spirit of freedom, and I imbibed from his precepts and examples the public and private sense of a man. Cicero in Latin, and Xenophon in Greek, are indeed the two ancients whom I would first propose to a liberal scholar; not only for the merit of their style and sentiments, but for the admirable lessons, which may be applied almost to every situation of public and private life. Cicero's Epistles may in particular afford the models of every form of correspondence, from the careless effusions of tenderness and friendship, to the well-guarded declaration of discreet and dignified resentment. After finishing this great author, a library of eloquence and reason, I formed a more extensive plan of reviewing the Latin classics,[8] under the four divisions of, 1. historians, 2. poets, 3. orators, and 4. philosophers, in a chronological series, from the days of Plautus and Sallust to the decline of the language and empire of Rome: and this plan, in the last twenty-seven months of my residence at Lausanne (January 1756—April 1758), I *nearly* accomplished. Nor was this review, however rapid, either hasty or superficial. I indulged myself in a second and even a third perusal of Terence, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, &c., and studied to imbibe the sense and spirit most congenial to my own. I never suffered a difficult or corrupt passage to escape, till I had viewed it in every light of which it was susceptible: though often disappointed, I always consulted the most learned or ingenious commentators, Torrentius and Dacier on Horace, Catrou and Servius on Virgil, Lipsius on Tacitus, Meziriac on Ovid, &c.; and in the ardour of my inquiries I embraced a large circle of historical and critical erudition. My abstracts of each book were made in the French language: my observations often branched into particular essays; and I can still read, without contempt, a dissertation of eight folio pages on eight lines (287-294) of the fourth Georgic of Virgil. Mr. Deyverdun, my friend, whose name will be frequently repeated, had joined with equal zeal, though not with equal perseverance, in the same undertaking. To him every thought, every composition, was instantly communicated; with him I enjoyed the benefits of a free conversation on the topics of our common studies.

But it is scarcely possible for a mind endowed with any active

[8] JOURNAL, January 1756.—I determined to read over the Latin authors in order; and read this year, Virgil, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Justin, Florus, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius. I also read and meditated Locke upon the Understanding.

curiosity to be long conversant with the Latin classics without aspiring to know the Greek originals, whom they celebrate as their masters, and of whom they so warmly recommend the study and imitation;

——— Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.

It was now that I regretted the early years which had been wasted in sickness or idleness, or mere idle reading; that I condemned the perverse method of our schoolmasters, who, by first teaching the mother language, might descend with so much ease and perspicuity to the origin and etymology of a derivative idiom. In the nineteenth year of my age I determined to supply this defect; and the lessons of Pavilliard again contributed to smooth the entrance of the way, the Greek alphabet, the grammar, and the pronunciation according to the French accent. At my earnest request we presumed to open the Iliad; and I had the pleasure of beholding, though darkly and through a glass, the true image of Homer, whom I had long since admired in an English dress. After my tutor had left me to myself, I worked my way through about half the Iliad, and afterwards interpreted alone a large portion of Xenophon and Herodotus. But my ardour, destitute of aid and emulation, was gradually cooled, and, from the barren task of searching words in a lexicon, I withdrew to the free and familiar conversation of Virgil and Tacitus. Yet in my residence at Lausanne I had laid a solid foundation, which enabled me, in a more propitious season, to prosecute the study of Grecian literature.

From a blind idea of the usefulness of such abstract science, my father had been desirous, and even pressing, that I should devote some time to the mathematics; nor could I refuse to comply with so reasonable a wish. During two winters I attended the private lectures of Monsieur de Traytorrens, who explained the elements of algebra and geometry, as far as the conic sections of the Marquis de l'Hôpital, and appeared satisfied with my diligence and improvement.[9] But as my childish propensity for numbers and calculations was totally extinct, I was content to receive the passive impression of

[9] JOURNAL, January 1757.—I began to study algebra under M. de Traytorrens, went through the elements of algebra and geometry and the three first books of the Marquis de l'Hôpital's Conic Sections. I also read Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius, Horace (with Dacier's and Torrentius's notes), Virgil, Ovid's Epistles, with Meziriac's Commentary, the Ars Amandi, and the Elegies; likewise the Augustus and Tiberius of Suetonius, and a Latin translation of Dion Cassius, from the death of Julius Cæsar to the death of Augustus. I also continued my correspondence, begun last year, with M. Allamand of Bex, and the Professor Breitinger of Zurich; and opened a new one with the Professor Gesner of Gottingen.

N.B. Last year and this I read St. John's Gospel, with part of Xenophon's Cyropædia; the Iliad, and Herodotus: but, upon the whole, I rather neglected my Greek.

my professor's lectures, without any active exercise of my own powers. As soon as I understood the principles I relinquished for ever the pursuit of the mathematics; nor can I lament that I desisted before my mind was hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence, which must, however, determine the actions and opinions of our lives. I listened with more pleasure to the proposal of studying the law of nature and nations, which was taught in the academy of Lausanne by Mr. Vicat, a professor of some learning and reputation. But, instead of attending his public or private course, I preferred in my closet the lessons of his masters, and my own reason. Without being disgusted by Grotius or Puffendorf, I studied in their writings the duties of a man, the rights of a citizen, the theory of justice (it is, alas! a theory), and the laws of peace and war, which have had some influence on the practice of modern Europe. My fatigues were alleviated by the good sense of their commentator Barbeyrac. Locke's Treatise of Government instructed me in the knowledge of Whig principles, which are rather founded in reason than experience; but my delight was in the frequent perusal of Montesquieu, whose energy of style, and boldness of hypothesis, were powerful to awaken and stimulate the genius of the age. The logic of De Crousaz had prepared me to engage with his master Locke, and his antagonist Bayle; of whom the former may be used as a bridle, and the latter as a spur, to the curiosity of a young philosopher. According to the nature of their respective works, the schools of argument and objection, I carefully went through the Essay on Human Understanding, and occasionally consulted the most interesting articles of the Philosophic Dictionary. In the infancy of my reason I turned over, as an idle amusement, the most serious and important treatise: in its maturity the most trifling performance could exercise my taste or judgment; and more than once I have been led by a novel into a deep and instructive train of thinking. But I cannot forbear to mention three particular books, since they may have remotely contributed to form the historian of the Roman empire. 1. From the Provincial Letters of Pascal, which almost every year I have perused with new pleasure, I learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony, even on subjects of ecclesiastical solemnity.[1] 2. The Life of Julian, by the Abbé de la Bleterie, first introduced me to the man and the times; and I should be glad to recover my first essay on the truth of the miracle which stopped the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. 3. In

[1] The sublime author of the Pensées would have shuddered if he could have foreseen the influence of his own work on minds like those of Voltaire and Gibbon. —M.

Giannone's Civil History of Naples I observed with a critical eye the progress and abuse of sacerdotal power, and the revolutions of Italy in the darker ages. This various reading, which I now conducted with discretion, was digested, according to the precept and model of Mr. Locke, into a large commonplace-book; a practice, however, which I do not strenuously recommend. The action of the pen will doubtless imprint an idea on the mind as well as on the paper; but I much question whether the benefits of this laborious method are adequate to the waste of time; and I must agree with Dr. Johnson (Idler, No. 74), "that what is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed."

During two years, if I forget some boyish excursions of a day or a week, I was fixed at Lausanne; but at the end of the third summer my father consented that I should make the tour of Switzerland with Pavilliard: and our short absence of one month (September 21st—October 20th, 1755) was a reward and relaxation of my assiduous studies. The fashion of climbing the mountains and reviewing the *Glaciers* had not yet been introduced by foreign travellers, who seek the sublime beauties of nature. But the political face of the country is not less diversified by the forms and spirit of so many various republics, from the jealous government of the *few* to the licentious freedom of the *many*. I contemplated with pleasure the new prospects of men and manners; though my conversation with the natives would have been more free and instructive, had I possessed the German as well as the French language. We passed through most of the principal towns in Switzerland; Neufchâtel, Bienne, Soleurre, Arau, Baden, Zurich, Basil, and Bern. In every place we visited the churches, arsenals, libraries, and all the most eminent persons; and after my return I digested my notes in fourteen or fifteen sheets of a French journal, which I despatched to my father, as a proof that my time and his money had not been misspent. Had I found this journal among his papers I might be tempted to select some passages; but I will not transcribe the printed accounts, and it may be sufficient to notice a remarkable spot, which left a deep and lasting impression on my memory. From Zurich we proceeded to the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedlen, more commonly styled Our Lady of the Hermits. I was astonished by the profuse ostentation of riches in the poorest corner of Europe; amidst a savage scene of woods and mountains, a palace appears to have been erected by magic; and it was erected by the potent magic of religion. A crowd of palmers and votaries was prostrate before the altar. The title and worship of the Mother of God provoked my indignation; and the lively naked image of superstition suggested to me, as in the same place it had

done to Zuinglius, the most pressing argument for the reformation of the church. About two years after this tour I passed at Geneva a useful and agreeable month; but this excursion and some short visits in the Pays de Vaud did not materially interrupt my studious and sedentary life at Lausanne.

My thirst of improvement, and the languid state of science at Lausanne, soon prompted me to solicit a literary correspondence with several men of learning, whom I had not an opportunity of personally consulting. 1. In the perusal of Livy (xxx. 44) I had been stopped by a sentence in a speech of Hannibal, which cannot be reconciled by any torture with his character or argument. The commentators dissemble or confess their perplexity. It occurred to me that the change of a single letter, by substituting *otio* instead of *odio*, might restore a clear and consistent sense; but I wished to weigh my emendation in scales less partial than my own. I addressed myself to M. Crevier, the successor of Rollin, and a professor in the university of Paris, who had published a large and valuable edition of Livy. His answer was speedy and polite; he praised my ingenuity, and adopted my conjecture. 2. I maintained a Latin correspondence, at first anonymous, and afterwards in my own name, with professor Breitinger of Zurich, the learned editor of a Septuagint Bible. In our frequent letters we discussed many questions of antiquity, many passages of the Latin classics. I proposed my interpretations and amendments. His censures, for he did not spare my boldness of conjecture, were sharp and strong; and I was encouraged by the consciousness of my strength, when I could stand in free debate against a critic of such eminence and erudition. 3. I corresponded on similar topics with the celebrated Professor Matthew Gesner, of the university of Gottingen; and he accepted as courteously as the two former the invitation of an unknown youth. But his abilities might possibly be decayed; his elaborate letters were feeble and prolix; and when I asked his proper direction, the vain old man covered half a sheet of paper with the foolish enumeration of his titles and offices. 4. These professors of Paris, Zurich, and Gottingen were strangers whom I presumed to address on the credit of their name; but Mr. Allamand, minister at Bex, was my personal friend, with whom I maintained a more free and interesting correspondence. He was a master of language, of science, and, above all, of dispute; and his acute and flexible logic could support, with equal address, and perhaps with equal indifference, the adverse sides of every possible question. His spirit was active, but his pen had been indolent. Mr. Allamand had exposed himself to much scandal and reproach by an anonymous letter (1745) to the protestants of France,

in which he labours to persuade them that *public* worship is the exclusive right and duty of the state, and that their numerous assemblies of dissenters and rebels were not authorised by the law or the gospel. His style is animated, his arguments specious; and if the papist may seem to lurk under the mask of a protestant, the philosopher is concealed under the disguise of a papist. After some trials in France and Holland, which were defeated by his fortune or his character, a genius that might have enlightened or deluded the world was buried in a country living, unknown to fame, and discontented with mankind. *Est sacrificulus in pago, et rusticos decipit.* As often as private or ecclesiastical business called him to Lausanne I enjoyed the pleasure and benefit of his conversation, and we were mutually flattered by our attention to each other. Our correspondence in his absence chiefly turned on Locke's metaphysics,[2] which he attacked, and I defended; the origin of ideas, the principles of evidence, and the doctrine of liberty;

And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

By fencing with so skilful a master I acquired some dexterity in the use of my philosophic weapons; but I was still the slave of education and prejudice. He had some measures to keep; and I much suspect that he never showed me the true colours of his secret scepticism.

Before I was recalled from Switzerland I had the satisfaction of seeing the most extraordinary man of the age; a poet, an historian, a philosopher, who has filled thirty quartos, of prose and verse, with his various productions, often excellent, and always entertaining. Need I add the name of Voltaire? After forfeiting, by his own misconduct, the friendship of the first of kings, he retired, at the age of sixty, with a plentiful fortune, to a free and beautiful country, and resided two winters (1757 and 1758) in the town or neighbourhood of Lausanne. My desire of beholding Voltaire, whom I then rated above his real magnitude, was easily gratified. He received me with civility as an English youth; but I cannot boast of any peculiar notice or distinction, *Virgilium vidi tantum.*

The ode which he composed on his first arrival on the banks of the Leman Lake, *O Maison d'Aristippe! O Jardin d'Epicure*, &c., had been imparted as a secret to the gentleman by whom I was intro-

[2] "One of these (M. Allamand), the friend and correspondent of Gibbon, deserves particularly to be noticed here, on account of two letters, published in the posthumous works of that historian, containing a criticism on Locke's arguments against innate ideas, so very able and judicious that it may be still read with advantage by many logicians of no small note in the learned world. Had those letters happened to have sooner attracted my attention, I should not have delayed so long to do this tardy justice to their merits."—Dugald Stewart, Preface to Encyclop. Brit., vol. ii. p. 13.—M.

duced. He allowed me to read it twice; I knew it by heart; and, as my discretion was not equal to my memory, the author was soon displeased by the circulation of a copy. In writing this trivial anecdote, I wished to observe whether my memory was impaired, and I have the comfort of finding that every line of the poem is still engraved in fresh and indelible characters. The highest gratification which I derived from Voltaire's residence at Lausanne was the uncommon circumstance of hearing a great poet declaim his own productions on the stage. He had formed a company of gentlemen and ladies, some of whom were not destitute of talents. A decent theatre was framed at Monrepos, a country-house at the end of a suburb; dresses and scenes were provided at the expense of the actors; and the author directed the rehearsals with the zeal and attention of paternal love. In two successive winters his tragedies of Zayre, Alzire, Zulime, and his sentimental comedy of the Enfant Prodigue, were played at the theatre of Monrepos. Voltaire represented the characters best adapted to his years, Lusignan, Alvaréz, Benassar, Euphemon. His declamation was fashioned to the pomp and cadence of the old stage; and he expressed the enthusiasm of poetry rather than the feelings of nature. My ardour, which soon became conspicuous, seldom failed of procuring me a ticket. The habits of pleasure fortified my taste for the French theatre, and that taste has perhaps abated my idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakspeare, which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of an Englishman. The wit and philosophy of Voltaire, his table and theatre, refined, in a visible degree, the manners of Lausanne; and, however addicted to study, I enjoyed my share of the amusements of society. After the representation of Monrepos I sometimes supped with the actors. I was now familiar in some, and acquainted in many, houses; and my evenings were generally devoted to cards and conversation, either in private parties or numerous assemblies.

I hesitate, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. By this word I do not mean the polite attention, the gallantry, without hope or design, which has originated in the spirit of chivalry, and is interwoven with the texture of French manners. I understand by this passion the union of desire, friendship, and tenderness, which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod were embellished by the

virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was respectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content with a small salary and laborious duty in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village he bestowed a liberal, and even learned, education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages; and in her short visits to some relations at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honourably encouraged the connection. In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom; she listened to the voice of truth and passion, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity: but on my return to England, I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that, without his consent, I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son;[3] my wound was

[3] See Œuvres de Rousseau, tom. xxxiii. p. 88, 89, octavo edition. As an author, I shall not appeal from the judgment, or taste, or caprice of *Jean Jacques*; but that extraordinary man, whom I admire and pity, should have been less precipitate in condemning the moral character and conduct of a stranger.[a]

[a] From a letter dated at Motiers, the 4th of June, 1763, and addressed to M. M——ca:—You have given me a commission for Mademoiselle Curchod, of which I shall acquit myself ill, precisely on account of my esteem for her. The coldness of Mr. Gibbon makes me think ill of him. I have again read his book. It is deformed by the perpetual affectation and pursuit of brilliancy. Mr. Gibbon is no man for me. I cannot think him well adapted to Mademoiselle Curchod. He that does not know her value is unworthy of her; he that knows it, and can desert her, is a man to be despised. She does not know what she is about; this man serves her more effectually than her own heart. I should a thousand times rather see him leave her free and poor among us, than bring her to be rich and miserable in England. In truth, I hope Mr. Gibbon may not come here. I should wish to dissemble, but I could not; I should wish to do well, and I feel that I should spoil all.—M.

The letter in which Gibbon communicated to Mademoiselle Curchod the opposition of his father to their marriage still exists in manuscript. The first pages are tender and melancholy, as might be expected from an unhappy lover; the latter became by degrees calm and reasonable, and the letter concludes with these words: "*C'est pourquoi, Mademoiselle, j'ai*

insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died; his stipend died with him; his daughter retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother; but in her lowest distress she maintained a spotless reputation and a dignified behaviour. A rich banker of Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure; and in the capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every change of prosperity and disgrace he has reclined on the bosom of a faithful friend; and Mademoiselle Curchod is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy.

Whatsoever have been the fruits of my education, they must be ascribed to the fortunate banishment which placed me at Lausanne. I have sometimes applied to my own fate the verses of Pindar, which remind an Olympic champion that his victory was the consequence of his exile; and that at home, like a domestic fowl, his days might have rolled away inactive or inglorious.

. . . ἦτοι καὶ τεά κεν,
Ἐνδομάχας ἅτ' ἀλέκτωρ,
Συγγόνῳ παρ' ἑστίᾳ
Ἀκλεὴς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε ποδῶν·
Εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα
Κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτρας.[4] *Olymp.* xii.

If my childish revolt against the religion of my country had not stripped me in time of my academic gown, the five important years, so liberally improved in the studies and conversation of Lausanne, would have been steeped in port and prejudice among the monks of Oxford. Had the fatigue of idleness compelled me to read, the path

[4] Thus, like the crested bird of Mars, at home
Engaged in foul domestic jars,
And wasted with intestine wars,
Inglorious hadst thou spent thy vig'rous bloom;
Had not sedition's civil broils
Expell'd thee from thy native *Crete*,
And driv'n thee with more glorious toils
Th' *Olympic* crown in *Pisa's* plain to meet. WEST'S *Pind.*

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l'honneur d'être votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur, Edouard Gibbon." He truly loved Mademoiselle Curchod; but every one loves according to his character, and that of Gibbon was incapable of a despairing passion.—M. Suard's Memoir—M.

of learning would not have been enlightened by a ray of philosophic freedom. I should have grown to manhood ignorant of the life and language of Europe, and my knowledge of the world would have been confined to an English cloister. But my religious error fixed me at Lausanne, in a state of banishment and disgrace. The rigid course of discipline and abstinence to which I was condemned invigorated the constitution of my mind and body; poverty and pride estranged me from my countrymen. One mischief, however, and in their eyes a serious and irreparable mischief, was derived from the success of my Swiss education: I had ceased to be an Englishman. At the flexible period of youth, from the age of sixteen to twenty-one, my opinions, habits, and sentiments were cast in a foreign mould; the faint and distant remembrance of England was almost obliterated; my native language was grown less familiar; and I should have cheerfully accepted the offer of a moderate independence on the terms of perpetual exile. By the good sense and temper of Pavilliard my yoke was insensibly lightened: he left me master of my time and actions; but he could neither change my situation nor increase my allowance, and with the progress of my years and reason I impatiently sighed for the moment of my deliverance. At length, in the spring of the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight, my father signified his permission and his pleasure that I should immediately return home. We were then in the midst of a war: the resentment of the French at our taking their ships without a declaration had rendered that polite nation somewhat peevish and difficult. They denied a passage to English travellers, and the road through Germany was circuitous, toilsome, and perhaps, in the neighbourhood of the armies, exposed to some danger. In this perplexity, two Swiss officers of my acquaintance in the Dutch service, who were returning to their garrisons, offered to conduct me through France as one of their companions; nor did we sufficiently reflect that my borrowed name and regimentals might have been considered, in case of a discovery, in a very serious light. I took my leave of Lausanne on the 11th of April, 1758, with a mixture of joy and regret, in the firm resolution of revisiting, as a man, the persons and places which had been so dear to my youth. We travelled slowly, but pleasantly, in a hired coach, over the hills of Franche-compté and the fertile province of Lorraine, and passed, without accident or inquiry, through several fortified towns of the French frontier: from thence we entered the wild Ardennes of the Austrian duchy of Luxemburg; and after crossing the Meuse at Liége, we traversed the heaths of Brabant, and reached, on the fifteenth day, our Dutch garrison of Bois le Duc.

In our passage through Nancy my eye was gratified by the aspect of a regular and beautiful city, the work of Stanislaus, who, after the storms of Polish royalty, reposed in the love and gratitude of his new subjects of Lorraine. In our halt at Maestricht I visited Mr. De Beaufort, a learned critic, who was known to me by his specious arguments against the five first centuries of the Roman History.[5] After dropping my regimental companions I stepped aside to visit Rotterdam and the Hague. I wished to have observed a country, the monument of freedom and industry; but my days were numbered, and a longer delay would have been ungraceful. I hastened to embark at the Brill, landed the next day at Harwich, and proceeded to London, where my father awaited my arrival. The whole term of my first absence from England was four years, ten months, and fifteen days.

In the prayers of the church our personal concerns are judiciously reduced to the threefold distinction of *mind*, *body*, and *estate*. The sentiments of the mind excite and exercise our social sympathy. The review of my moral and literary character is the most interesting to myself and to the public; and I may expatiate, without reproach, on my private studies, since they have produced the public writings which can alone entitle me to the esteem and friendship of my readers. The experience of the world inculcates a discreet reserve on the subject of our person and estate, and we soon learn that a free disclosure of our riches or poverty would provoke the malice of envy, or encourage the insolence of contempt.

The only person in England whom I was impatient to see was my aunt Porten, the affectionate guardian of my tender years. I hastened to her house in College-street, Westminster; and the evening was spent in the effusions of joy and confidence. It was not without some awe and apprehension that I approached the presence of my father. My infancy, to speak the truth, had been neglected at home; the severity of his look and language at our last parting still dwelt on my memory; nor could I form any notion of his character, or my probable reception. They were both more agreeable than I could expect. The domestic discipline of our ancestors has been relaxed by the philosophy and softness of the age; and if my father remembered that he had trembled before a

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[5] Gibbon expresses himself cautiously upon this remarkable work of M. Beaufort, which in the *destructive* part of the discussion led the way, in some parts, with scarcely inferior acuteness, for the inquiries of Niebuhr; the more difficult and more questionable task of reconstruction was left for the bold and inventive German.—M.

stern parent, it was only to adopt with his own son an opposite mode of behaviour. He received me as a man and a friend; all constraint was banished at our first interview, and we ever afterwards continued on the same terms of easy and equal politeness. He applauded the success of my education; every word and action was expressive of the most cordial affection; and our lives would have passed without a cloud, if his economy had been equal to his fortune, or if his fortune had been equal to his desires. During my absence he had married his second wife, Miss Dorothea Patton, who was introduced to me with the most unfavourable prejudice. I considered his second marriage as an act of displeasure, and I was disposed to hate the rival of my mother. But the injustice was in my own fancy, and the imaginary monster was an amiable and deserving woman. I could not be mistaken in the first view of her understanding, her knowledge, and the elegant spirit of her conversation: her polite welcome, and her assiduous care to study and gratify my wishes, announced at least that the surface would be smooth; and my suspicions of art and falsehood were gradually dispelled by the full discovery of her warm and exquisite sensibility. After some reserve on my side, our minds associated in confidence and friendship; and as Mrs. Gibbon had neither children nor the hopes of children, we more easily adopted the tender names and genuine characters of mother and of son. By the indulgence of these parents, I was left at liberty to consult my taste or reason in the choice of place, of company, and of amusements; and my excursions were bounded only by the limits of the island and the measure of my income. Some faint efforts were made to procure me the employment of secretary to a foreign embassy; and I listened to a scheme which would again have transported me to the continent. Mrs. Gibbon, with seeming wisdom, exhorted me to take chambers in the Temple, and devote my leisure to the study of the law. I cannot repent of having neglected her advice. Few men, without the spur of necessity, have resolution to force their way through the thorns and thickets of that gloomy labyrinth. Nature had not endowed me with the bold and ready eloquence which makes itself heard amidst the tumult of the bar; and I should probably have been diverted from the labours of literature, without acquiring the fame or fortune of a successful pleader. I had no need to call to my aid the regular duties of a profession; every day, every hour, was agreeably filled; nor have I known, like so many of my countrymen, the tediousness of an idle life.

Of the two years (May, 1758—May, 1760) between my return to England and the embodying of the Hampshire militia, I passed about nine months in London, and the remainder in the country.

The metropolis affords many amusements, which are open to all. It is itself an astonishing and perpetual spectacle to the curious eye; and each taste, each sense may be gratified by the variety of objects which will occur in the long circuit of a morning walk. I assiduously frequented the theatres at a very propitious æra of the stage, when a constellation of excellent actors, both in tragedy and comedy, was eclipsed by the meridian brightness of Garrick in the maturity of his judgment and vigour of his performance. The pleasures of a town-life are within the reach of every man who is regardless of his health, his money, and his company. By the contagion of example I was sometimes seduced; but the better habits which I had formed at Lausanne induced me to seek a more elegant and rational society; and if my search was less easy and successful than I might have hoped, I shall at present impute the failure to the disadvantages of my situation and character. Had the rank and fortune of my parents given them an annual establishment in London, their own house would have introduced me to a numerous and polite circle of acquaintance. But my father's taste had always preferred the highest and the lowest company, for which he was equally qualified; and after a twelve years' retirement he was no longer in the memory of the great with whom he had associated. I found myself a stranger in the midst of a vast and unknown city; and at my entrance into life I was reduced to some dull family parties, and some scattered connections, which were not such as I should have chosen for myself. The most useful friends of my father were the Mallets: they received me with civility and kindness, at first on his account, and afterwards on my own; and (if I may use Lord Chesterfield's words) I was soon *domesticated* in their house. Mr. Mallet, a name among the English poets, is praised by an unforgiving enemy for the ease and elegance of his conversation, and his wife was not destitute of wit or learning. By his assistance I was introduced to Lady Hervey, the mother of the present earl of Bristol. Her age and infirmities confined her at home; her dinners were select; in the evening her house was open to the best company of both sexes and all nations; nor was I displeased at her preference and affectation of the manners, the language, and the literature of France. But my progress in the English world was in general left to my own efforts, and those efforts were languid and slow. I had not been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom; nor would it be reasonable to complain of the just consequences of my sickly childhood, foreign education, and reserved temper. While coaches were rattling through Bond-street, I have passed many a solitary evening in my lodging with my books. My

studies were sometimes interrupted by a sigh, which I breathed towards Lausanne; and on the approach of spring I withdrew without reluctance from the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure. In each of the twenty-five years of my acquaintance with London (1758–1783) the prospect gradually brightened; and this unfavourable picture most properly belongs to the first period after my return from Switzerland.

My father's residence in Hampshire, where I have passed many light, and some heavy hours, was at Buriton, near Petersfield, one mile from the Portsmouth road, and at the easy distance of fifty-eight miles from London.[6] An old mansion, in a state of decay, had been converted into the fashion and convenience of a modern house; and if strangers had nothing to see, the inhabitants had little to desire. The spot was not happily chosen, at the end of the village and the bottom of the hill: but the aspect of the adjacent grounds was various and cheerful; the downs commanded a noble prospect, and the long hanging woods in sight of the house could not perhaps have been improved by art or expense. My father kept in his own hands the whole of the estate, and even rented some additional land; and whatsoever might be the balance of profit and loss, the farm supplied him with amusement and plenty. The produce maintained a number of men and horses, which were multiplied by the intermixture of domestic and rural servants; and in the intervals of labour the favourite team, a handsome set of bays or greys, was harnessed to the coach. The economy of the house was regulated by the taste and prudence of Mrs. Gibbon. She prided herself in the elegance of her occasional dinners; and from the uncleanly avarice of Madame Pavilliard, I was suddenly transported to the daily neatness and luxury of an English table. Our immediate neighbourhood was rare and rustic; but from the verge of our hills, as far as Chichester and Goodwood, the western district of Sussex was interspersed with noble seats and hospitable families, with whom we cultivated a friendly, and might have enjoyed a very frequent, intercourse. As my stay at Buriton was always voluntary, I was received and dismissed with smiles; but the comforts of my retirement did not depend on the ordinary pleasures of the country. My father could never inspire me with his love and knowledge of farming. I never handled a gun, I seldom mounted a horse; and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation. At home I occupied a pleasant and spacious apartment; the library on the same floor

[6] The estate and manor of Beriton, otherwise Buriton, were considerable, and were sold a few years ago to Lord Stawell.—SHEFFIELD.

was soon considered as my peculiar domain; and I might say with truth that I was never less alone than when by myself. My sole complaint, which I piously suppressed, arose from the kind restraint imposed on the freedom of my time. By the habit of early rising I always secured a sacred portion of the day, and many scattered moments were stolen and employed by my studious industry. But the family hours of breakfast, of dinner, of tea, and of supper, were regular and long: after breakfast Mrs. Gibbon expected my company in her dressing-room; after tea my father claimed my conversation and the perusal of the newspapers; and in the midst of an interesting work I was often called down to receive the visit of some idle neighbours. Their dinners and visits required, in due season, a similar return; and I dreaded the period of the full moon, which was usually reserved for our more distant excursions. I could not refuse attending my father, in the summer of 1759, to the races at Stockbridge, Reading, and Odiham, where he had entered a horse for the hunters' plate; and I was not displeased with the sight of our Olympic games, the beauty of the spot, the fleetness of the horses, and the gay tumult of the numerous spectators. As soon as the militia business was agitated, many days were tediously consumed in meetings of deputy-lieutenants at Petersfield, Alton, and Winchester. In the close of the same year, 1759, Sir Simeon (then Mr.) Stewart attempted an unsuccessful contest for the county of Southampton, against Mr. Legge, Chancellor of the Exchequer: a well-known contest, in which Lord Bute's influence was first exerted and censured. Our canvass at Portsmouth and Gosport lasted several days; but the interruption of my studies was compensated in some degree by the spectacle of English manners, and the acquisition of some practical knowledge.

If in a more domestic or more dissipated scene my application was somewhat relaxed, the love of knowledge was inflamed and gratified by the command of books; and I compared the poverty of Lausanne with the plenty of London. My father's study at Buriton was stuffed with much trash of the last age, with much high church divinity and politics, which have long since gone to their proper place: yet it contained some valuable editions of the classics and the fathers, the choice, as it should seem, of Mr. Law; and many English publications of the times had been occasionally added. From this slender beginning I have gradually formed a numerous and select library, the foundation of my works, and the best comfort of my life, both at home and abroad. On the receipt of the first quarter, a large share of my allowance was appropriated to my literary wants. I cannot forget the joy with which I exchanged a bank-note of twenty pounds for the twenty volumes of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscrip-

tions; nor would it have been easy, by any other expenditure of the same sum, to have procured so large and lasting a fund of rational amusement. At a time when I most assiduously frequented this school of ancient literature, I thus expressed my opinion of a learned and various collection, which since the year 1759 has been doubled in magnitude, though not in merit:—"Une de ces sociétés, qui ont mieux immortalisé Louis XIV. qu'une ambition souvent pernicieuse aux hommes, commençoit déjà ces recherches qui réunissent la justesse de l'esprit, l'aménité, et l'érudition: où l'on voit tant de découvertes, et quelquefois, ce qui ne cède qu'à peine aux découvertes, une *ignorance* modeste et *savante*." The review of my library must be reserved for the period of its maturity; but in this place I may allow myself to observe that I am not conscious of having ever bought a book from a motive of ostentation, that every volume, before it was deposited on the shelf, was either read or sufficiently examined, and that I soon adopted the tolerating maxim of the elder Pliny, "nullum esse librum tam malum ut non ex aliquâ parte prodesset." I could not yet find leisure or courage to renew the pursuit of the Greek language, excepting by reading the lessons of the Old and New Testament every Sunday, when I attended the family to church. The series of my Latin authors was less strenuously completed; but the acquisition, by inheritance or purchase, of the best editions of Cicero, Quintilian, Livy, Tacitus, Ovid, &c., afforded a fair prospect, which I seldom neglected. I persevered in the useful method of abstracts and observations; and a single example may suffice, of a note which had almost swelled into a work. The solution of a passage of Livy (xxxviii. 38) involved me in the dry and dark treatises of Greaves, Arbuthnot, Hooper, Bernard, Eisenschmidt, Gronovius, La Barré, Freret, &c.; and in my French essay (chap. 20) I ridiculously send the reader to my own *manuscript* remarks on the weights, coins, and measures of the ancients, which were abruptly terminated by the militia drum.

As I am now entering on a more ample field of society and study, I can only hope to avoid a vain and prolix garrulity by overlooking the vulgar crowd of my acquaintance, and confining myself to such intimate friends among books and men as are best entitled to my notice by their own merit and reputation, or by the deep impression which they have left on my mind. Yet I will embrace this occasion of recommending to the young student a practice which about this time I myself adopted. After glancing my eye over the design and order of a new book, I suspended the perusal till I had finished the task of self-examination, till I had revolved, in a solitary walk, all that I knew or believed or had thought on the subject of the whole

work, or of some particular chapter: I was then qualified to discern how much the author added to my original stock; and if I was sometimes satisfied by the agreement, I was sometimes armed by the opposition, of our ideas. The favourite companions of my leisure were our English writers since the Revolution: they breathe the spirit of reason and liberty; and they most seasonably contributed to restore the purity of my own language, which had been corrupted by the long use of a foreign idiom. By the judicious advice of Mr. Mallet, I was directed to the writings of Swift and Addison; wit and simplicity are their common attributes; but the style of Swift is supported by manly original vigour; that of Addison is adorned by the female graces of elegance and mildness.[7] The old reproach, that no British altars had been raised to the Muse of History, was recently disproved by the first performances of Robertson and Hume, the histories of Scotland and of the Stuarts. I will assume the presumption of saying that I was not unworthy to read them: nor will I disguise my different feelings in the repeated perusals. The perfect composition, the nervous language, the well-turned periods of Dr. Robertson, inflamed me to the ambitious hope that I might one day tread in his footsteps: the calm philosophy, the careless inimitable beauties of his friend and rival, often forced me to close the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair.

The design of my first work, the Essay on the Study of Literature, was suggested by a refinement of vanity, the desire of justifying and praising the object of a favourite pursuit. In France, to which my ideas were confined, the learning and language of Greece and Rome were neglected by a philosophic age. The guardian of those studies, the Academy of Inscriptions, was degraded to the lowest rank among the three royal societies of Paris: the new appellation of Erudits was contemptuously applied to the successors of Lipsius and Casaubon; and I was provoked to hear (see M. d'Alembert, Discours Préliminaire à l'Encyclopédie) that the exercise of the memory, their sole merit, had been superseded by the nobler faculties of the imagination and the judgment. I was ambitious of proving, by my own example, as well as by my precepts, that all the faculties of the mind may be exercised and displayed by the study of ancient literature; I began to select and adorn the various proofs and illustrations which had offered themselves in reading the classics; and the first pages or chapters of my essay were composed before my departure from Lausanne. The hurry of the journey, and of the first

[7] This is remarkable: but this transient admiration of Swift and Addison produced little effect on the style of Gibbon. —M.

weeks of my English life, suspended all thoughts of serious application: but my object was ever before my eyes; and no more than ten days, from the first to the eleventh of July, were suffered to elapse after my summer establishment at Buriton. My essay was finished in about six weeks; and as soon as a fair copy had been transcribed by one of the French prisoners at Petersfield, I looked round for a critic and judge of my first performance. A writer can seldom be content with the doubtful recompense of solitary approbation; but a youth ignorant of the world, and of himself, must desire to weigh his talents in some scales less partial than his own: my conduct was natural, my motive laudable, my choice of Dr. Maty judicious and fortunate. By descent and education Dr. Maty, though born in Holland, might be considered as a Frenchman; but he was fixed in London by the practice of physic and an office in the British Museum. His reputation was justly founded on the eighteen volumes of the *Journal Britannique*, which he had supported, almost alone, with perseverance and success. This humble though useful labour, which had once been dignified by the genius of Bayle and the learning of Le Clerc, was not disgraced by the taste, the knowledge, and the judgment of Maty: he exhibits a candid and pleasing view of the state of literature in England during a period of six years (January, 1750—December, 1755); and, far different from his angry son, he handles the rod of criticism with the tenderness and reluctance of a parent. The author of the *Journal Britannique* sometimes aspires to the character of a poet and philosopher: his style is pure and elegant; and in his virtues, or even in his defects, he may be ranked as one of the last disciples of the school of Fontenelle. His answer to my first letter was prompt and polite: after a careful examination he returned my manuscript, with some animadversion and much applause; and when I visited London in the ensuing winter, we discussed the design and execution in several free and familiar conversations. In a short excursion to Buriton I reviewed my Essay, according to his friendly advice; and after suppressing a third, adding a third, and altering a third, I consummated my first labour by a short preface, which is dated February 3rd, 1759. Yet I still shrunk from the press with the terrors of virgin modesty: the manuscript was safely deposited in my desk; and as my attention was engaged by new objects, the delay might have been prolonged till I had fulfilled the precept of Horace, "nonumque prematur in annum." Father Sirmond, a learned jesuit, was still more rigid, since he advised a young friend to expect the mature age of fifty before he gave himself or his writings to the public (Olivet, Histoire de l'Académie Françoise, tom. ii. p. 143). The counsel was singular; but it

is still more singular that it should have been approved by the example of the author. Sirmond was himself fifty-five years of age when he published (in 1614) his first work, an edition of Sidonius Apollinaris, with many valuable annotations. (See his Life, before the great edition of his works in five volumes folio, Paris, 1696, è Typographiâ Regiâ.)

Two years elapsed in silence: but in the spring of 1761 I yielded to the authority of a parent, and complied, like a pious son, with the wish of my own heart. My private resolves were influenced by the state of Europe. About this time the belligerent powers had made and accepted overtures of peace; our English plenipotentiaries were named to assist at the Congress of Augsburg, which never met: I wished to attend them as a gentleman or a secretary; and my father fondly believed that the proof of some literary talents might introduce me to public notice and second the recommendations of my friends. After a last revisal I consulted with Mr. Mallet and Dr. Maty, who approved the design and promoted the execution. Mr. Mallet, after hearing me read my manuscript, received it from my hands, and delivered it into those of Becket, with whom he made an agreement in my name; an easy agreement: I required only a certain number of copies; and, without transferring my property, I devolved on the bookseller the charges and profits of the edition. Dr. Maty undertook, in my absence, to correct the sheets: he inserted, without my knowledge, an elegant and flattering epistle to the author; which is composed, however, with so much art, that, in case of a defeat, his favourable report might have been ascribed to the indulgence of a friend for the rash attempt of a *young English* gentleman. The work was printed and published, under the title of 'Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature, à Londres, chez T. Becket et P. A. de Hondt, 1761,' in a small volume in duodecimo: my dedication to my father, a proper and pious address, was composed the 28th of May: Dr. Maty's letter is dated the 16th of June; and I received the first copy (June 23rd) at Alresford, two days before I marched with the Hampshire militia. Some weeks afterwards, on the same ground, I presented my book to the late Duke of York, who breakfasted in Colonel Pitt's tent. By my father's direction, and Mallet's advice, many literary gifts were distributed to several eminent characters in England and France; two books were sent to the Count de Caylus, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, at Paris: I had reserved twenty copies for my friends at Lausanne, as the first fruits of my education, and a grateful token of my remembrance: and on all these persons I levied an unavoidable tax of civility and compliment. It is not surprising that a work, of which the style and sentiments were so totally foreign,

should have been more successful abroad than at home. I was delighted by the copious extracts, the warm commendations, and the flattering predictions of the Journals of France and Holland: and the next year (1762) a new edition (I believe at Geneva) extended the fame, or at least the circulation, of the work. In England it was received with cold indifference, little read, and speedily forgotten: a small impression was slowly dispersed; the bookseller murmured, and the author (had his feelings been more exquisite) might have wept over the blunders and baldness of the English translation. The publication of my History fifteen years afterwards revived the memory of my first performance, and the Essay was eagerly sought in the shops. But I refused the permission which Becket solicited of reprinting it: the public curiosity was imperfectly satisfied by a pirated copy of the booksellers of Dublin; and when a copy of the original edition has been discovered in a sale, the primitive value of half-a-crown has risen to the fanciful price of a guinea or thirty shillings.

I have expatiated on the petty circumstances and period of my first publication, a memorable æra in the life of a student when he ventures to reveal the measure of his mind: his hopes and fears are multiplied by the idea of self-importance, and he believes for a while that the eyes of mankind are fixed on his person and performance. Whatever may be my present reputation, it no longer rests on the merit of this first essay; and at the end of twenty-eight years I may appreciate my juvenile work with the impartiality, and almost with the indifference, of a stranger. In his answer to Lady Hervey, the Count de Caylus admires, or affects to admire, "les livres sans nombre que Mr. Gibbon a lus et très bien lus." But, alas! my stock of erudition at that time was scanty and superficial; and if I allow myself the liberty of naming the Greek masters, my genuine and personal acquaintance was confined to the Latin classics. The most serious defect of my Essay is a kind of obscurity and abruptness, which always fatigues, and may often elude, the attention of the reader. Instead of a precise and proper definition of the title itself, the sense of the word *Littérature* is loosely and variously applied: a number of remarks and examples, historical, critical, philosophical, are heaped on each other without method or connection; and, if we except some introductory pages, all the remaining chapters might indifferently be reversed or transposed. The obscurity of many passages is often affected, *brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio;* the desire of expressing perhaps a common idea with sententious and oracular brevity: alas! how fatal has been the imitation of Montesquieu! But this obscurity sometimes proceeds from a mixture of

light and darkness in the author's mind; from a partial ray which strikes upon an angle, instead of spreading itself over the surface of an object. After this fair confession I shall presume to say that the Essay does credit to a young writer of two-and-twenty years of age, who had read with taste, who thinks with freedom, and who writes in a foreign language with spirit and elegance. The defence of the early History of Rome and the new Chronology of Sir Isaac Newton form a specious argument. The patriotic and political design of the Georgics is happily conceived; and any probable conjecture, which tends to raise the dignity of the poet and the poem, deserves to be adopted without a rigid scrutiny. Some dawnings of a philosophic spirit enlighten the general remarks on the study of history and of man. I am not displeased with the inquiry into the origin and nature of the gods of polytheism, which might deserve the illustration of a riper judgment. Upon the whole, I may apply to the first labour of my pen the speech of a far superior artist, when he surveyed the first productions of his pencil. After viewing some portraits which he had painted in his youth, my friend Sir Joshua Reynolds acknowledged to me that he was rather humbled than flattered by the comparison with his present works; and that, after so much time and study, he had conceived his improvement to be much greater than he found it to have been.[8]

At Lausanne I composed the first chapters of my Essay in French, the familiar language of my conversation and studies, in which it was easier for me to write than in my mother-tongue. After my return to England I continued the same practice, without any affectation, or design of repudiating (as Dr. Bentley would say) my vernacular idiom. But I should have escaped some anti-Gallican clamour had I been content with the more natural character of an English author. I should have been more consistent had I rejected Mallet's advice of prefixing an English dedication to a French book; a confusion of tongues that seemed to accuse the ignorance of my patron. The use of a foreign dialect might be excused by the hope of being employed

[8] The intelligent modern reader will be inclined to adopt Gibbon's estimate of his early work. Its faults are very clearly indicated; it is a collection of shrewd and acute observations, without order or connection. The defence of the early History of Rome and of Newton's Chronology are not more than specious; there is ingenuity, but little more, in the theory about the Georgics; and Gibbon, in his maturer judgment, might have smiled at his attributing the thirty years' quiet of the turbulent veterans who composed the military colonies to the pacific influence of Virgil's poetry. No subject has been pursued with greater erudition and variety of opinion by Continental scholars than the origin of polytheism. Gibbon's theory was far advanced beyond his age, and might suggest something like an amicable compromise between the Symbolists and Anti-Symbolists of Germany, the respective schools of Creuzer and Voss. The essay is to be found in the fourth volume of the miscellaneous works.—M.

as a negotiator, by the desire of being generally understood on the continent; but my true motive was doubtless the ambition of new and singular fame, an Englishman claiming a place among the writers of France. The Latin tongue had been consecrated by the service of the church, it was refined by the imitation of the ancients; and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the scholars of Europe enjoyed the advantage, which they have gradually resigned, of conversing and writing in a common and learned idiom. As that idiom was no longer in any country the vulgar speech, they all stood on a level with each other; yet a citizen of old Rome might have smiled at the best Latinity of the Germans and Britons; and we may learn from the *Ciceronianus* of Erasmus how difficult it was found to steer a middle course between pedantry and barbarism. The Romans themselves had sometimes attempted a more perilous task, of writing in a living language, and appealing to the taste and judgment of the natives. The vanity of Tully was doubly interested in the Greek memoirs of his own consulship; and if he modestly supposes that some Latinisms might be detected in his style, he is confident of his own skill in the art of Isocrates and Aristotle; and he requests his friend Atticus to disperse the copies of his work at Athens, and in the other cities of Greece (*ad Atticum*, i. 19, ii. 1). But it must not be forgotten that, from infancy to manhood, Cicero and his contemporaries had read, and declaimed, and composed, with equal diligence in both languages; and that he was not allowed to frequent a Latin school till he had imbibed the lessons of the Greek grammarians and rhetoricians. In modern times the language of France has been diffused by the merit of her writers, the social manners of the natives, the influence of the monarchy, and the exile of the protestants. Several foreigners have seized the opportunity of speaking to Europe in this common dialect, and Germany may plead the authority of Leibnitz and Frederic, of the first of her philosophers and the greatest of her kings. The just pride and laudable prejudice of England has restrained this communication of idioms; and, of all the nations on this side of the Alps, my countrymen are the least practised and least perfect in the exercise of the French tongue. By Sir William Temple and Lord Chesterfield it was only used on occasions of civility and business, and their printed letters will not be quoted as models of composition. Lord Bolingbroke may have published in French a sketch of his Reflections on Exile; but his reputation now reposes on the address of Voltaire, "Docte sermones utriusque linguæ;" and, by his English dedication to Queen Caroline and his Essay on Epic Poetry, it should seem that Voltaire himself wished to deserve a return of the same compliment. The exception of Count

Hamilton cannot fairly be urged; though an Irishman by birth, he was educated in France from his childhood. Yet I am surprised that a long residence in England, and the habits of domestic conversation, did not affect the ease and purity of his inimitable style; and I regret the omission of his English verses, which might have afforded an amusing object of comparison. I might therefore assume the *primus ego in patriam, &c.;* but with what success I have explored this untrodden path must be left to the decision of my French readers. Dr. Maty, who might himself be questioned as a foreigner, has secured his retreat at my expense. "Je ne crois pas que vous vous piquiez d'être moins facile à reconnoître pour un Anglois que Lucullus pour un Romain." My friends at Paris have been more indulgent: they received me as a countryman, or at least as a provincial; but they were friends and Parisians.[9] The defects which Maty insinuates, "Ces traits saillans, ces figures hardies, ce sacrifice de la règle au sentiment, et de la cadence à la force," are the faults of the youth rather than of the stranger: and after the long and laborious exercise of my own language I am conscious that my French style has been ripened and improved.[1]

I have already hinted that the publication of my Essay was delayed till I had embraced the military profession. I shall now amuse myself with the recollection of an active scene, which bears no affinity to any other period of my studious and social life.

In the outset of a glorious war the English people had been defended by the aid of German mercenaries. A national militia has been the cry of every patriot since the Revolution; and this measure, both in Parliament and in the field, was supported by the country gentlemen or Tories, who insensibly transferred their loyalty to the house of Hanover: in the language of Mr. Burke, they have changed the idol, but they have preserved the idolatry. In the act of offering our names and receiving our commissions as major and captain in the Hampshire regiment (June 12th, 1759), we had not supposed that we should be dragged away, my father from his farm, myself from my books, and condemned, during two years and a half (May 10, 1760—December 23, 1762), to a wandering life of military servitude. But a weekly or monthly exercise of thirty thousand provin-

[9] The copious extracts which were given in the *Journal Étranger* by Mr. Suard, a judicious critic, must satisfy both the author and the public. I may here observe, that I have never seen in any literary review a tolerable account of my History. The manufacture of journals, at least on the continent, is miserably debased.

[1] Two modern writers of imagination, Mr. Beckford and the late Mr. Hope, originally wrote, the one Vathek, the other Anastasius, in French; but perhaps the most extraordinary effort of composition in a foreign language by an Englishman is the translation of Hudibras by Mr. Townley.—M.

cials would have left them useless and ridiculous; and after the pretence of an invasion had vanished, the popularity of Mr. Pitt gave a sanction to the illegal step of keeping them till the end of the war under arms, in constant pay and duty, and at a distance from their respective homes. When the King's order for our embodying came down, it was too late to retreat, and too soon to repent. The South battalion of the Hampshire militia was a small independent corps of four hundred and seventy-six, officers and men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Worsley, who, after a prolix and passionate contest, delivered us from the tyranny of the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Bolton. My proper station, as first captain, was at the head of my own, and afterwards of the grenadier company; but in the absence, or even in the presence, of the two field officers, I was entrusted by my friend and my father with the effective labour of dictating the orders, and exercising the battalion. With the help of an original journal, I could write the history of my bloodless and inglorious campaigns; but as these events have lost much of their importance in my own eyes, they shall be despatched in a few words. From Winchester, the first place of assembly (June 4, 1760), we were removed, at our own request, for the benefit of a foreign education. By the arbitrary, and often capricious, orders of the War Office, the battalion successively marched to the pleasant and hospitable Blandford (June 17); to Hilsea barracks, a seat of disease and discord (September 1); to Cranbrook in the Weald of Kent (December 11); to the sea-coast of Dover (December 27); to Winchester camp (June 25, 1761); to the populous and disorderly town of Devizes (October 23); to Salisbury (February 28, 1762); to our beloved Blandford a second time (March 9); and finally, to the fashionable resort of Southampton (June 2), where the colours were fixed till our final dissolution (December 23). On the beach at Dover we had exercised in sight of the Gallic shores. But the most splendid and useful scene of our life was a four months' encampment on Winchester Down, under the command of the Earl of Effingham. Our army consisted of the thirty-fourth regiment of foot and six militia corps. The consciousness of defects was stimulated by friendly emulation. We improved our time and opportunities in morning and evening field-days; and in the general reviews the South Hampshire were rather a credit than a disgrace to the line. In our subsequent quarters of the Devizes and Blandford we advanced with a quick step in our military studies; the ballot of the ensuing summer renewed our vigour and youth; and had the militia subsisted another year, we might have contested the prize with the most perfect of our brethren.

The loss of so many busy and idle hours was not compensated by any elegant pleasure; and my temper was insensibly soured by the society of our rustic officers. In every state there exists, however, a balance of good and evil. The habits of a sedentary life were usefully broken by the duties of an active profession: in the healthful exercise of the field I hunted with a battalion, instead of a pack; and at that time I was ready, at any hour of the day or night, to fly from quarters to London, from London to quarters, on the slightest call of private or regimental business. But my principal obligation to the militia was the making me an Englishman and a soldier. After my foreign education, with my reserved temper, I should long have continued a stranger to my native country, had I not been shaken in this various scene of new faces and new friends; had not experience forced me to feel the characters of our leading men, the state of parties, the forms of office, and the operation of our civil and military system. In this peaceful service I imbibed the rudiments of the language and science of tactics, which opened a new field of study and observation. I diligently read and meditated the *Mémoires Militaires* of Quintus Icilius (Mr. Guichardt), the only writer who has united the merits of a professor and a veteran. The discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion; and the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman empire.

A youth of any spirit is fired even by the play of arms, and in the first sallies of my enthusiasm I had seriously attempted to embrace the regular profession of a soldier. But this military fever was cooled by the enjoyment of our mimic Bellona, who soon unveiled to my eyes her naked deformity. How often did I sigh for my proper station in society and letters! How often (a proud comparison) did I repeat the complaint of Cicero in the command of a provincial army! "Clitellæ bovi sunt impositæ. Est incredibile quàm me negotii tædeat. Non habet satis magnum campum ille tibi non ignotus cursus animi; et industriæ meæ præclara opera cessat. Lucem, *libros*, urbem, domum, vos desidero. Sed feram, ut potero; sit modo annuum. Si prorogatur, actum est."[2] From a service without danger I might indeed have retired without disgrace; but as often as I hinted a wish of resigning, my fetters were riveted by the friendly entreaties of the colonel, the parental authority of the major, and my own regard for the honour and welfare of the battalion. When I felt that my personal escape was impracticable, I bowed my neck to

[2] Epist. ad Atticum, lib. v. 15.

the yoke: my servitude was protracted far beyond the annual patience of Cicero; and it was not till after the preliminaries of peace that I received my discharge, from the act of government which disembodied the militia.

When I complain of the loss of time, justice to myself and to the militia must throw the greatest part of that reproach on the first seven or eight months, while I was obliged to learn as well as to teach. The dissipation of Blandford, and the disputes of Portsmouth, consumed the hours which were not employed in the field; and amid the perpetual hurry of an inn, a barrack, or a guard-room, all literary ideas were banished from my mind. After this long fast, the longest which I have ever known, I once more tasted at Dover the pleasures of reading and thinking; and the hungry appetite with which I opened a volume of Tully's philosophical works is still present to my memory. The last review of my Essay before its publication had prompted me to investigate the *nature of the gods;* my inquiries led me to the Histoire Critique du Manichéisme of Beausobre, who discusses many deep questions of Pagan and Christian theology: and from this rich treasury of facts and opinions I deduced my own consequences, beyond the holy circle of the author. After this recovery I never relapsed into indolence; and my example might prove that in the life most averse to study some hours may be stolen, some minutes may be snatched. Amidst the tumult of Winchester camp I sometimes thought and read in my tent; in the more settled quarters of the Devizes, Blandford, and Southampton, I always secured a separate lodging and the necessary books; and in the summer of 1762, while the new militia was raising, I enjoyed at Beriton two or three months of literary repose. In forming a new plan of study, I hesitated between the mathematics and the Greek language; both of which I had neglected since my return from Lausanne. I consulted a learned and friendly mathematician, Mr. George Scott, a pupil of de Moivre; and his map of a country which I have never explored may perhaps be more serviceable to others. As soon as I had given the preference to Greek, the example of Scaliger and my own reason determined me on the choice of Homer, the father of poetry, and the Bible of the ancients: but Scaliger ran through the Iliad in one and twenty days; and I was not dissatisfied with my own diligence for performing the same labour in an equal number of weeks. After the first difficulties were surmounted, the language of nature and harmony soon became easy and familiar, and each day I sailed upon the ocean with a brisker gale and a more steady course.

Ἐν δ' ἄνεμος πρῆσεν μέσον ἰστίον, ἀμφὶ δὲ κῦμα
Στείρῃ πορφύρεον μεγάλ' ἴαχε, νηὸς ἰούσης·
Ἡ δ' ἔθεεν κατὰ κῦμα διαπρήσσουσα κέλευθον.[3] *Ilias*, A. 481.

In the study of a poet who has since become the most intimate of my friends, I successively applied many passages and fragments of Greek writers; and among these I shall notice a Life of Homer, in the Opuscula Mythologica of Gale, several books of the Geography of Strabo, and the entire treatise of Longinus, which, from the title and the style, is equally worthy of the epithet of *sublime*. My grammatical skill was improved, my vocabulary was enlarged; and in the militia I acquired a just and indelible knowledge of the first of languages. On every march, in every journey, Horace was always in my pocket, and often in my hand; but I should not mention his two critical epistles, the amusement of a morning, had they not been accompanied by the elaborate commentary of Dr. Hurd, now Bishop of Worcester. On the interesting subjects of composition and imitation of epic and dramatic poetry I presumed to think for myself; and thirty close-written pages in folio could scarcely comprise my full and free discussion of the sense of the master and the pedantry of the servant.

After his oracle Dr. Johnson, my friend Sir Joshua Reynolds denies all original genius, any natural propensity of the mind to one art or science rather than another. Without engaging in a metaphysical or rather verbal dispute, I *know*, by experience, that from my early youth I aspired to the character of an historian. While I served in the militia, before and after the publication of my Essay, this idea ripened in my mind; nor can I paint in more lively colours the feelings of the moment than by transcribing some passages, under their respective dates, from a journal which I kept at that time.

Beriton, April 14, 1761.

(In a short excursion from Dover.)

"Having thought of several subjects for an historical composition, I chose the expedition of Charles VIII. of France into Italy. I read two memoirs of Mr. de Foncemagne in the Academy of Inscriptions (tom. xvii. p. 539-607), and abstracted them. I likewise finished this day a dissertation, in which I examined the right of Charles VIII. to the crown of Naples, and the rival claims of the House

[3] —— Fair wind, and blowing fresh,
Apollo sent them; quick they rear'd the mast,
Then spread th' unsullied canvas to the gale,
And the wind fill'd it. Roar'd the sable flood
Around the bark, that ever as she went
Dash'd wide the brine and scudded swift away.—Cowper's *Homer*.

of Anjou and Arragon: it consists of ten folio pages, besides large notes."

BERITON, AUGUST 4, 1761.

(In a week's excursion from Winchester camp.)

"After having long revolved subjects for my intended historical essay, I renounced my first thought of the expedition of Charles VIII. as too remote from us, and rather an introduction to great events than great and important in itself. I successively chose and rejected the crusade of Richard I., the barons' wars against John and Henry III., the history of Edward the Black Prince, the lives and comparisons of Henry V. and the Emperor Titus, the life of Sir Philip Sidney, and that of the Marquis of Montrose. At length I have fixed on Sir Walter Raleigh for my hero. His eventful story is varied by the characters of the soldier and sailor, the courtier and historian; and it may afford such a fund of materials as I desire, which have not yet been properly manufactured. At present I cannot attempt the execution of this work. Free leisure, and the opportunity of consulting many books, both printed and manuscript, are as necessary as they are impossible to be attained in my present way of life. However, to acquire a general insight into my subject and resources, I read the Life of Sir Walter Raleigh by Dr. Birch, his copious article in the General Dictionary by the same hand, and the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I. in Hume's History of England."

BERITON, JANUARY, 1762.

(In a month's absence from the Devizes.)

"During this interval of repose I again turned my thoughts to Sir Walter Raleigh, and looked more closely into my materials. I read the two volumes in quarto of the Bacon Papers, published by Dr. Birch; the Fragmenta Regalia of Sir Robert Naunton; Mallet's Life of Lord Bacon, and the political treatises of that great man in the first volume of his works, with many of his letters in the second; Sir William Monson's Naval Tracts; and the elaborate Life of Sir Walter Raleigh, which Mr. Oldys has prefixed to the best edition of his History of the World. My subject opens upon me, and in general improves upon a nearer prospect."

BERITON, JULY 26, 1762.

(During my summer residence.)

"I am afraid of being reduced to drop my hero; but my time has not, however, been lost in the research of his story, and of a memorable æra of our English annals. The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh, by Oldys, is a very poor performance; a servile panegyric, or flat

apology, tediously minute, and composed in a dull and affected style. Yet the author was a man of diligence and learning, who had read everything relative to his subject, and whose ample collections are arranged with perspicuity and method. Excepting some anecdotes lately revealed in the Sidney and Bacon Papers, I know not what I should be able to add. My ambition (exclusive of the uncertain merit of style and sentiment) must be confined to the hope of giving a good abridgment of Oldys. I have even the disappointment of finding some parts of this copious work very dry and barren; and these parts are unluckily some of the most characteristic; Raleigh's colony of Virginia, his quarrels with Essex, the true secret of his conspiracy, and, above all, the detail of his private life, the most essential and important to a biographer. My best resource would be in the circumjacent history of the times, and perhaps in some digressions artfully introduced, like the fortunes of the Peripatetic philosophy in the portrait of Lord Bacon. But the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. are the periods of English history which have been the most variously illustrated; and what new lights could I reflect on a subject which has exercised the accurate industry of *Birch*, the lively and curious acuteness of *Walpole*, the critical spirit of *Hurd*, the vigorous sense of *Mallet* and *Robertson*, and the impartial philosophy of *Hume*? Could I even surmount these obstacles, I should shrink with terror from the modern history of England, where every character is a problem, and every reader a friend or an enemy; where a writer is supposed to hoist a flag of party, and is devoted to damnation by the adverse faction. Such would be *my* reception at home: and abroad, the historian of Raleigh must encounter an indifference far more bitter than censure or reproach. The events of his life are interesting; but his character is ambiguous, his actions are obscure, his writings are English, and his fame is confined to the narrow limits of our language and our island. I must embrace a safer and more extensive theme.

"There is one which I should prefer to all others, *The History of the Liberty of the Swiss*,[4] of that independence which a brave people rescued from the House of Austria, defended against a Dauphin of France, and finally sealed with the blood of Charles of Burgundy. From such a theme, so full of public spirit, of military glory, of examples of virtue, of lessons of government, the dullest stranger would catch fire: what might not *I* hope, whose talents, whatsoever

[4] This historical ground is now occupied by the great work of Müller. The late Mr. Planta's History of the Helvetic Confederacy is a very pleasing narrative, chiefly drawn from Müller; but for a popular history I should prefer that of Zschokke, Schweizerlands Geschichte für das Schweizervolk.—M.

they may be, would be inflamed with the zeal of patriotism! But the materials of this history are inaccessible to me, fast locked in the obscurity of an old barbarous German dialect, of which I am totally ignorant, and which I cannot resolve to learn for this sole and peculiar purpose.

"I have another subject in view, which is the contrast of the former history: the one a poor, warlike, virtuous republic, which emerges into glory and freedom; the other a commonwealth, soft, opulent, and corrupt; which, by just degrees, is precipitated from the abuse to the loss of her liberty: both lessons are, perhaps, equally instructive. This second subject is, *The History of the Republic of Florence, under the House of Medicis*:[5] a period of one hundred and fifty years, which rises or descends from the dregs of the Florentine democracy to the title and dominion of Cosmo de Medicis in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. I might deduce a chain of revolutions not unworthy of the pen of Vertot; singular men, and singular events; the Medicis four times expelled, and as often recalled; and the Genius of Freedom reluctantly yielding to the arms of Charles V. and the policy of Cosmo. The character and fate of Savanarola, and the revival of arts and letters in Italy, will be essentially connected with the elevation of the family and the fall of the republic. The Medicis, stirps quasi fataliter nata ad instauranda vel fovenda studia (Lipsius ad Germanos et Gallos, Epist. viii.), were illustrated by the patronage of learning; and enthusiasm was the most formidable weapon of their adversaries. On this splendid subject I shall most probably fix; but *when*, or *where*, or *how* will it be executed? I behold in a dark and doubtful perspective

Res altâ terrâ, et caligine mersas."

The youthful habits of the language and manners of France had left in my mind an ardent desire of revisiting the continent on a larger and more liberal plan. According to the law of custom, and perhaps of reason, foreign travel completes the education of an English gentleman: my father had consented to my wish, but I was detained above four years by my rash engagement in the militia. I eagerly grasped the first moments of freedom: three or four weeks in Hampshire and London were employed in the preparations of my journey, and the farewell visits of friendship and civility: my last act

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[5] The works of the late Mr. Roscoe, the Lives of Lorenzo and of Leo X., have but partially fulfilled this great design. The literary part of these histories is executed with much elegance. The great political picture would require a firmer and more vigorous hand.—M.

in town was to applaud Mallet's new tragedy of Elvira; a post-chaise conveyed me to Dover, the packet to Boulogne, and such was my diligence that I reached Paris on the 28th of January, 1763, only thirty-six days after the disbanding of the militia. Two or three years were loosely defined for the term of my absence; and I was left at liberty to spend that time in such places and in such a manner as was most agreeable to my taste and judgment.

In this first visit I passed three months and a half (January 28th—May 9th), and a much longer space might have been agreeably filled without any intercourse with the natives. At home we are content to move in the daily round of pleasure and business; and a scene which is always present is supposed to be within our knowledge, or at least within our power. But in a foreign country, curiosity is our business and our pleasure; and the traveller, conscious of his ignorance, and covetous of his time, is diligent in the search and the view of every object that can deserve his attention. I devoted many hours of the morning to the circuit of Paris and the neighbourhood, to the visit of churches and palaces conspicuous by their architecture, to the royal manufactures, collections of books and pictures, and all the various treasures of art, of learning, and of luxury. An Englishman may hear without reluctance that in these curious and costly articles Paris is superior to London; since the opulence of the French capital arises from the defects of its government and religion. In the absence of Louis XIV. and his successors, the Louvre has been left unfinished: but the millions which have been lavished on the sands of Versailles, and the morass of Marli, could not be supplied by the legal allowance of a British king. The splendour of the French nobles is confined to their town residence; that of the English is more usefully distributed in their country seats; and we should be astonished at our own riches, if the labours of architecture, the spoils of Italy and Greece, which are now scattered from Inverary to Wilton, were accumulated in a few streets between Marylebone and Westminster. All superfluous ornament is rejected by the cold frugality of the protestants; but the catholic superstition, which is always the enemy of reason, is often the parent of the arts. The wealthy communities of priests and monks expend their revenues in stately edifices; and the parish church of St. Sulpice, one of the noblest structures in Paris, was built and adorned by the private industry of a late curé. In this outset, and still more in the sequel of my tour, my eye was amused; but the pleasing vision cannot be fixed by the pen; the particular images are darkly seen through the medium of five-and-twenty years, and the narrative of my life must not degenerate into a book of travels.

But the principal end of my journey was to enjoy the society of a polished and amiable people, in whose favour I was strongly prejudiced, and to converse with some authors, whose conversation, as I fondly imagined, must be far more pleasing and instructive than their writings. The moment was happily chosen. At the close of a successful war the British name was respected on the continent:

——— Clarum et venerabile nomen
Gentibus.

Our opinions, our fashions, even our games, were adopted in France; a ray of national glory illuminated each individual, and every Englishman was supposed to be born a patriot and a philosopher. For myself, I carried a personal recommendation; my name and my Essay were already known; the compliment of having written in the French language entitled me to some returns of civility and gratitude. I was considered as a man of letters, who wrote for amusement. Before my departure I had obtained from the Duke de Nivernois, Lady Hervey, the Mallets, Mr. Walpole, &c., many letters of recommendation to their private or literary friends. Of these epistles the reception and success were determined by the character and situation of the persons by whom and to whom they were addressed: the seed was sometimes cast on a barren rock, and it sometimes multiplied an hundred fold in the production of new shoots, spreading branches, and exquisite fruit. But upon the whole, I had reason to praise the national urbanity, which from the court has diffused its gentle influence to the shop, the cottage, and the schools. Of the men of genius of the age, Montesquieu and Fontenelle were no more; Voltaire resided on his own estate near Geneva; Rousseau in the preceding year had been driven from his hermitage of Montmorency; and I blush at my having neglected to seek, in this journey, the acquaintance of Buffon. Among the men of letters whom I saw, d'Alembert and Diderot held the foremost rank in merit, or at least in fame. I shall content myself with enumerating the well-known names of the Count de Caylus, of the Abbé de la Bleterie, Barthelemy, Reynal, Arnaud, of Messieurs de la Condamine, du Clos, de Ste Palayé, de Bougainville, Caperonnier, de Guignes, Suard,[6] &c.,

[6] M. Suard thus describes the impression made by Gibbon's manners in society:—

"As to his manners in society, without doubt the agreeableness (*amabilité*) of Gibbon was neither that yielding and retiring complaisance, nor that modesty which is forgetful of self; but his vanity (*amour-propre*) never showed itself in an offensive manner: anxious to succeed and to please, he wished to command attention, and obtained it without difficulty by a conversation animated, sprightly, and full of matter: all that was dictatorial (*tranchant*) in his tone betrayed not so much that desire of domineering over others, which is always offensive, as confidence in himself; and that confidence was justified both by his powers and by his success. Notwithstanding this, his

without attempting to discriminate the shades of their characters, or the degrees of our connection. Alone, in a morning visit, I commonly found the artists and authors of Paris less vain, and more reasonable, than in the circles of their equals, with whom they mingle in the houses of the rich. Four days in a week I had a place, without invitation, at the hospitable tables of Mesdames Geoffrin and du Bocage, of the celebrated Helvetius, and of the Baron d'Olbach. In these symposia the pleasures of the table were improved by lively and liberal conversation; the company was select, though various and voluntary.

The society of Madame du Bocage was more soft and moderate than that of her rivals, and the evening conversations of M. de Foncemagne were supported by the good sense and learning of the principal members of the Academy of Inscriptions. The opera and the Italians I occasionally visited; but the French theatre, both in tragedy and comedy, was my daily and favourite amusement. Two famous actresses then divided the public applause. For my own part, I preferred the consummate art of the Clairon to the intemperate sallies of the Dumesnil, which were extolled by her admirers as the genuine voice of nature and passion. Fourteen weeks insensibly stole away; but had I been rich and independent, I should have prolonged, and perhaps have fixed, my residence at Paris.

Between the expensive style of Paris and of Italy it was prudent to interpose some months of tranquil simplicity, and at the thoughts of Lausanne I again lived in the pleasures and studies of my early youth. Shaping my course through Dijon and Besançon, in the last of which places I was kindly entertained by my cousin Acton, I arrived in the month of May, 1763, on the banks of the Leman Lake. It had been my intention to pass the Alps in the autumn; but such are the simple attractions of the place, that the year had almost expired before my departure from Lausanne in the ensuing spring. An absence of five years had not made much alteration in

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conversation never carried one away (*n'entrainait jamais*); its fault was a kind of arrangement, which never permitted him to say anything unless well. This fault might be attributed to the difficulty of speaking a foreign language, had not his friend, Lord Sheffield, who defends him from this suspicion of study in his conversation, admitted at the least that before he wrote a note or a letter he arranged completely in his mind what he wished to express. He appears, indeed, always to have written thus. Dr. Gregory, in his *Letters on Literature*, says that Gibbon composed as he was walking up and down his room, and that he never wrote a sentence without having perfectly formed and arranged it in his head. Besides, French was at least as familiar to him as English; his residence at Lausanne, where he spoke it exclusively, had made it for some time his habitual language; and one would not have supposed that he had ever spoken any other, if he had not been betrayed by a very strong accent, by certain *tics* of pronunciation, certain sharp tones, which, to ears accustomed from infancy to softer inflexions of voice, marred the pleasure which was felt in listening to him."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. i. p. 277.—M.

manners, or even in persons. My old friends, of both sexes, hailed my voluntary return; the most genuine proof of my attachment. They had been flattered by the present of my book, the produce of their soil; and the good Pavilliard shed tears of joy as he embraced a pupil whose literary merit he might fairly impute to his own labours. To my old list I added some new acquaintance, and among the strangers I shall distinguish Prince Lewis of Wirtemberg, the brother of the reigning duke, at whose country-house, near Lausanne, I frequently dined: a wandering meteor, and at length a falling star, his light and ambitious spirit had successively dropped from the firmament of Prussia, of France, and of Austria; and his faults, which he styled his misfortunes, had driven him into philosophic exile in the Pays de Vaud. He could now moralise on the vanity of the world, the equality of mankind, and the happiness of a private station. His address was affable and polite, and, as he had shone in courts and armies, his memory could supply, and his eloquence could adorn, a copious fund of interesting anecdotes. His first enthusiasm was that of charity and agriculture; but the sage gradually lapsed in the saint, and Prince Lewis of Wirtemberg is now buried in a hermitage near Mayence, in the last stage of mystic devotion. By some ecclesiastical quarrel, Voltaire had been provoked to withdraw himself from Lausanne, and retire to his castle at Ferney, where I again visited the poet and the actor, without seeking his more intimate acquaintance, to which I might now have pleaded a better title. But the theatre which he had founded, the actors whom he had formed, survived the loss of their master; and recent from Paris, I attended with pleasure at the representation of several tragedies and comedies. I shall not descend to specify particular names and characters; but I cannot forget a private institution which will display the innocent freedom of Swiss manners. My favourite society had assumed, from the age of its members, the proud denomination of the spring (*la société du printems*). It consisted of fifteen or twenty young unmarried ladies, of genteel though not of the very first families; the eldest perhaps about twenty; all agreeable, several handsome, and two or three of exquisite beauty. At each other's houses they assembled almost every day, without the control, or even the presence, of a mother or an aunt; they were trusted to their own prudence among a crowd of young men of every nation in Europe. They laughed, they sung, they danced, they played at cards, they acted comedies; but in the midst of this careless gaiety they respected themselves, and were respected by the men; the invisible line between liberty and licentiousness was never transgressed by a gesture, a word, or a look, and their virgin chastity was never sullied by the breath of scandal or

suspicion: a singular institution, expressive of the innocent simplicity of Swiss manners. After having tasted the luxury of England and Paris, I could not have returned with satisfaction to the coarse and homely table of Madame Pavilliard; nor was her husband offended that I now entered myself as a *pensionnaire*, or boarder, in the elegant house of Mr. de Mesery, which may be entitled to a short remembrance, as it has stood above twenty years, perhaps, without a parallel in Europe. The house in which we lodged was spacious and convenient, in the best street, and commanding from behind a noble prospect over the country and the Lake. Our table was served with neatness and plenty; the boarders were select; we had the liberty of inviting any guests at a stated price; and in the summer the scene was occasionally transferred to a pleasant villa about a league from Lausanne. The characters of master and mistress were happily suited to each other, and to their situation. At the age of seventy-five, Madame de Mesery, who has survived her husband, is still a graceful, I had almost said a handsome woman. She was alike qualified to preside in her kitchen and her drawing-room; and such was the equal propriety of her conduct, that, of two or three hundred foreigners, none ever failed in respect, none could complain of her neglect, and none could ever boast of her favour. Mesery himself, of the noble family of De Crousaz, was a man of the world, a jovial companion, whose easy manners and natural sallies maintained the cheerfulness of his house. His wit could laugh at his own ignorance: he disguised, by an air of profusion, a strict attention to his interest; and in this situation he appeared like a nobleman who spent his fortune and entertained his friends. In this agreeable society I resided nearly eleven months (May, 1763—April, 1764); and in this second visit to Lausanne, among a crowd of my English companions, I knew and esteemed Mr. Holroyd (now Lord Sheffield); and our mutual attachment was renewed and fortified in the subsequent stages of our Italian journey. Our lives are in the power of chance, and a slight variation on either side, in time or place, might have deprived me of a friend whose activity in the ardour of youth was always prompted by a benevolent heart, and directed by a strong understanding.

If my studies at Paris had been confined to the study of the world, three or four months would not have been unprofitably spent. My visits, however superficial, to the Academy of Medals and the public libraries, opened a new field of inquiry; and the view of so many manuscripts of different ages and characters induced me to consult the two great Benedictine works, the *Diplomatica* of Mabillon, and the *Palæographia* of Montfaucon. I studied the theory without

attaining the practice of the art: nor should I complain of the intricacy of Greek abbreviations and Gothic alphabets, since every day, in a familiar language, I am at a loss to decipher the hieroglyphics of a female note. In a tranquil scene, which revived the memory of my first studies, idleness would have been less pardonable: the public libraries of Lausanne and Geneva liberally supplied me with books; and if many hours were lost in dissipation, many more were employed in literary labour. In the country, Horace and Virgil, Juvenal and Ovid, were my assiduous companions: but, in town, I formed and executed a plan of study for the use of my Transalpine expedition: the topography of old Rome, the ancient geography of Italy, and the science of medals. 1. I diligently read, almost always with a pen in my hand, the elaborate treatises of Nardini, Donatus, &c., which fill the fourth volume of the Roman Antiquities of Grævius. 2. I next undertook and finished the *Italia Antiqua* of Cluverius, a learned native of Prussia, who had measured, on foot, every spot, and has compiled and digested every passage of the ancient writers. These passages in Greek or Latin authors I perused in the text of Cluverius, in two folio volumes: but I separately read the descriptions of Italy by Strabo, Pliny, and Pomponius Mela, the Catalogues of the Epic poets, the Itineraries of Wesseling's Antoninus, and the coasting Voyage of Rutilius Numatianus; and I studied two kindred subjects in the Mesures Itinéraires of d'Anville, and the copious work of Bergier, *Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain.* From these materials I formed a table of roads and distances reduced to our English measure; filled a folio common-place-book with my collections and remarks on the geography of Italy; and inserted in my journal many long and learned notes on the insulæ and populousness of Rome, the social war, the passage of the Alps by Hannibal, &c. 3. After glancing my eye over Addison's agreeable dialogues, I more seriously read the great work of Ezechiel Spanheim, *de Præstantiâ et Usû Numismatum*, and applied with him the medals of the kings and emperors, the families and colonies, to the illustration of ancient history. And thus was I armed for my Italian journey.

I shall advance with rapid brevity in the narrative of this tour, in which somewhat more than a year (April, 1764—May, 1765) was agreeably employed. Content with tracing my line of march, and slightly touching on my personal feelings, I shall waive the minute investigation of the scenes which have been viewed by thousands, and described by hundreds, of our modern travellers. ROME is the great object of our pilgrimage; and 1st, the journey; 2nd, the residence; and 3rd, the return; will form the most proper and per-

spicuous division. 1. I climbed Mount Cenis, and descended into the plain of Piedmont, not on the back of an elephant, but on a light osier seat, in the hands of the dexterous and intrepid chairmen of the Alps. The architecture and government of Turin presented the same aspect of tame and tiresome uniformity, but the court was regulated with decent and splendid economy; and I was introduced to his Sardinian majesty Charles Emanuel, who, after the incomparable Frederic, held the second rank (proximus longo tamen intervallo) among the kings of Europe. The size and populousness of Milan could not surprise an inhabitant of London; but the fancy is amused by a visit to the Boromean Islands, an enchanted palace, a work of the fairies in the midst of a lake encompassed with mountains, and far removed from the haunts of men. I was less amused by the marble palaces of Genoa than by the recent memorials of her deliverance (in December, 1746) from the Austrian tyranny; and I took a military survey of every scene of action within the enclosure of her double walls. My steps were detained at Parma and Modena by the precious relics of the Farnese and Este collections; but, alas! the far greater part had been already transported, by inheritance or purchase, to Naples and Dresden. By the road of Bologna and the Apennine I at last reached Florence, where I reposed from June to September, during the heat of the summer months. In the Gallery, and especially in the Tribune, I first acknowledged, at the feet of the Venus of Medicis, that the chisel may dispute the pre-eminence with the pencil, a truth in the fine arts which cannot on this side of the Alps be felt or understood. At home I had taken some lessons of Italian; on the spot I read with a learned native the classics of the Tuscan idiom; but the shortness of my time, and the use of the French language, prevented my acquiring any facility of speaking; and I was a silent spectator in the conversations of our envoy, Sir Horace Mann, whose most serious business was that of entertaining the English at his hospitable table. After leaving Florence I compared the solitude of Pisa with the industry of Lucca and Leghorn, and continued my journey through Sienna to Rome, where I arrived in the beginning of October. 2. My temper is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel I have ever scorned to affect. But at the distance of twenty-five years I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the *eternal city*. After a sleepless night, I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus *stood*, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute

investigation. My guide was Mr. Byers, a Scotch antiquary of experience and taste; but in the daily labour of eighteen weeks the powers of attention were sometimes fatigued, till I was myself qualified, in a last review, to select and study the capital works of ancient and modern art. Six weeks were borrowed for my tour of Naples, the most populous of cities relative to its size, whose luxurious inhabitants seem to dwell on the confines of paradise and hell-fire. I was presented to the boy-king by our new envoy, Sir William Hamilton; who, wisely diverting his correspondence from the Secretary of State to the Royal Society and British Museum, has elucidated a country of such inestimable value to the naturalist and antiquarian. On my return I fondly embraced, for the last time, the miracles of Rome; but I departed without kissing the foot of Rezzonico (Clement XIII.), who neither possessed the wit of his predecessor Lambertini, nor the virtues of his successor Ganganelli. 3. In my pilgrimage from Rome to Loretto I again crossed the Apennine: from the coast of the Adriatic I traversed a fruitful and populous country, which could alone disprove the paradox of Montesquieu, that modern Italy is a desert. Without adopting the exclusive prejudice of the natives, I sincerely admire the paintings of the Bologna school. I hastened to escape from the sad solitude of Ferrara, which in the age of Cæsar was still more desolate. The spectacle of Venice afforded some hours of astonishment; the university of Padua is a dying taper; but Verona still boasts her amphitheatre, and his native Vicenza is adorned by the classic architecture of Palladio: the road of Lombardy and Piedmont (did Montesquieu find them without inhabitants?) led me back to Milan, Turin, and the passage of Mount Cenis, where I again crossed the Alps in my way to Lyons.

The use of foreign travel has been often debated as a general question; but the conclusion must be finally applied to the character and circumstances of each individual. With the education of boys, *where* or *how* they may pass over some juvenile years with the least mischief to themselves or others, I have no concern. But after supposing the previous and indispensable requisites of age, judgment, a competent knowledge of men and books, and a freedom from domestic prejudices, I will briefly describe the qualifications which I deem most essential to a traveller. He should be endowed with an active, indefatigable vigour of mind and body, which can seize every mode of conveyance, and support, with a careless smile, every hardship of the road, the weather, or the inn. The benefits of foreign travel will correspond with the degrees of these qualifications; but, in this sketch, those to whom I am known will not accuse me of framing my own panegyric. It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as

I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter,[7] that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire; and though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work.[8]

I had not totally renounced the southern provinces of France, but the letters which I found at Lyons were expressive of some impatience. Rome and Italy had satiated my curious appetite, and I was now ready to return to the peaceful retreat of my family and books After a happy fortnight I reluctantly left Paris, embarked at Calais, again landed at Dover, after an interval of two years and five months, and hastily drove through the summer dust and solitude of London.

On the 25th of June, 1765, I arrived at my father's house; and the five years and a half between my travels and my father's death (1770) are the portion of my life which I passed with the least enjoyment, and which I remember with the least satisfaction. Every spring I attended the monthly meeting and exercise of the militia at Southampton; and by the resignation of my father, and the death of Sir Thomas Worsley, I was successively promoted to the rank of major and lieutenant-colonel commandant; but I was each year more disgusted with the inn, the wine, the company, and the tiresome repetition of annual attendance and daily exercise. At home, the economy of the family and farm still maintained the same creditable appearance. My connection with Mrs. Gibbon was mellowed into a warm and solid attachment; my growing years abolished the distance that might yet remain between a parent and a son; and my behaviour satisfied my father, who was proud of the success, however imperfect in his own lifetime, of my literary talents. Our solitude was soon and often enlivened by the visit of the friend of my youth, M. Dey-

[7] Now the church of the Zocolants, or Franciscan Friars.—SHEFFIELD.

[8] "Perhaps," observes M. Suard, "it will not be difficult to trace, in the impressions from which the conception of the work arose, one of the causes of that war which Gibbon seems to have declared against Christianity; the design of which neither appears conformable to his character, little disposed to party-spirit, nor to that moderation of thought and sentiment which led him in all things, particular as well as general, to view the advantages as well as the evil consequences. But, struck with a first impression, Gibbon, in writing the history of the fall of the empire, saw in Christianity only an institution which had placed vespers, barefooted friars, and processions, in the room of the magnificent ceremonies of the worship of Jupiter, and the triumphs of the Capitol."—M.

verdun, whose absence from Lausanne I had sincerely lamented. About three years after my first departure he had emigrated from his native lake to the banks of the Oder in Germany. The *res angusta domi*, the waste of a decent patrimony by an impro[illegible] father, obliged him, like many of his countrymen, to confide [illegible] own industry; and he was entrusted with the education of a [illegible] prince, the grandson of the Margrave of Schavedt, of the [illegible] Family of Prussia. Our friendship was never cooled, our correspondence was sometimes interrupted; but I rather wished than hoped to obtain M. Deyverdun for the companion of my Italian tour. An unhappy though honourable passion drove him from his German court; and the attractions of hope and curiosity were fortified by the expectation of my speedy return to England. During four successive summers he passed several weeks or months at Beriton, and our free conversations, on every topic that could interest the heart or understanding, would have reconciled me to a desert or a prison. In the winter months of London my sphere of knowledge and action was somewhat enlarged by the many new acquaintance which I had contracted in the militia and abroad; and I must regret, as more than an acquaintance, Mr. Godfrey Clarke of Derbyshire, an amiable and worthy young man, who was snatched away by an untimely death. A weekly convivial meeting was established by myself and other travellers, under the name of the Roman Club.[9]

The renewal, or perhaps the improvement, of my English life was embittered by the alteration of my own feelings. At the age of twenty-one I was, in my proper station of a youth, delivered from the yoke of education, and delighted with the comparative state of liberty and affluence. My filial obedience was natural and easy; and in the gay prospect of futurity my ambition did not extend beyond the enjoyment of my books, my leisure, and my patrimonial estate, undisturbed by the cares of a family and the duties of a profession. But in the militia I was armed with power; in my travels I was exempt from control; and as I approached, as I gradually passed my thirtieth year, I began to feel the desire of being master in my own house. The most gentle authority will sometimes frown without reason, the most cheerful submission will sometimes murmur without cause; and such is the law of our imperfect nature, that we must either command or obey; that our personal liberty is supported by the obsequiousness

[9] The members were Lord Mountstuart (now Marquis of Bute), Colonel Edmonstone, William Weddal, Rev. Mr. Palgrave, Earl of Berkley, Godfrey Clarke (Member for Derbyshire), Holroyd (Lord Sheffield), Major Ridley, Thomas Charles Bigge, Sir William Guise, Sir John Aubrey, the late Earl of Abingdon, Hon. Peregrine Bertie, Rev. Mr. Cleaver, Hon. John Damer, Hon. George Damer (late Earl of Dorchester), Sir Thomas Gascoygne, Sir John Hort, E. Gibbon.

of our own dependants. While so many of my acquaintance were married or in parliament, or advancing with a rapid step in the various roads of honour and fortune, I stood alone, immovable and [redacted]ificant; for after the monthly meeting of 1770 I had even [redacted]rawn myself from the militia, by the resignation of an empty [redacted]arren commission. My temper is not susceptible of envy, and [redacted]view of successful merit has always excited my warmest applause. The miseries of a vacant life were never known to a man whose hours were insufficient for the inexhaustible pleasures of study. But I lamented that at the proper age I had not embraced the lucrative pursuits of the law or of trade, the chances of civil office or India adventure, or even the fat slumbers of the church; and my repentance became more lively as the loss of time was more irretrievable. Experience showed me the use of grafting my private consequence on the importance of a great professional body; the benefits of those firm connections which are cemented by hope and interest, by gratitude and emulation, by the mutual exchange of services and favours. From the emoluments of a profession I might have derived an ample fortune, or a competent income, instead of being stinted to the same narrow allowance, to be increased only by an event which I sincerely deprecated. The progress and the knowledge of our domestic disorders aggravated my anxiety, and I began to apprehend that I might be left in my old age without the fruits either of industry or inheritance.

In the first summer after my return, whilst I enjoyed at Beriton the society of my friend Deyverdun, our daily conversations expatiated over the field of ancient and modern literature; and we freely discussed my studies, my first Essay, and my future projects. The Decline and Fall of Rome I still contemplated at an awful distance: but the two historical designs which had balanced my choice were submitted to his taste; and in the parallel between the Revolutions of Florence and Switzerland, our common partiality for a country which was *his* by birth, and *mine* by adoption, inclined the scale in favour of the latter. According to the plan, which was soon conceived and digested, I embraced a period of two hundred years, from the association of the three peasants of the Alps to the plenitude and prosperity of the Helvetic body in the sixteenth century. I should have described the deliverance and victory of the Swiss, who have never shed the blood of their tyrants but in a field of battle; the laws and manners of the confederate states; the splendid trophies of the Austrian, Burgundian, and Italian wars; and the wisdom of a nation who, after some sallies of martial adventure, has been content to guard the blessings of peace with the sword of freedom.

must own myself responsible; but the public has ratified my judgment of that voluminous work, in which sense and learning are not illuminated by a ray of genius. The next specimen was the choice of my friend, *The Bath Guide*, a light and whimsical performance, of local, and even verbal, pleasantry. I started at the attempt; he smiled at my fears: his courage was justified by success; and a master of both languages will applaud the curious felicity with which he has transfused into French prose the spirit, and even the humour, of the English verse. It is not my wish to deny how deeply I was interested in these Memoirs, of which I need not surely be ashamed; but at the distance of more than twenty years, it would be impossible for me to ascertain the respective shares of the two associates. A long and intimate communication of ideas had cast our sentiments and style in the same mould. In our social labours we composed and corrected by turns; and the praise which I might honestly bestow would fall perhaps on some article or passage most properly my own. A second volume (for the year 1768) was published of these Memoirs. I will presume to say that their merit was superior to their reputation; but it is not less true that they were productive of more reputation than emolument. They introduced my friend to the protection, and myself to the acquaintance, of the Earl of Chesterfield, whose age and infirmities secluded him from the world; and of Mr. David Hume, who was under-secretary to the office in which Deyverdun was more humbly employed. The former accepted a dedication (April 12th, 1769), and reserved the author for the future education of his successor: the latter enriched the Journal with a reply to Mr. Walpole's Historical Doubts, which he afterwards shaped into the form of a note. The materials of the third volume were almost completed, when I recommended Deyverdun as governor to Sir Richard Worsley, a youth, the son of my old lieutenant-colonel, who was lately deceased. They set forwards on their travels; nor did they return to England till some time after my father's death.

My next publication was an accidental sally of love and resentment; of my reverence for modest genius, and my aversion for insolent pedantry. The sixth book of the Æneid is the most pleasing and perfect composition of Latin poetry. The descent of Æneas and the Sibyl to the infernal regions, to the world of spirits, expands an awful and boundless prospect, from the nocturnal gloom of the Cumæan grot,

> Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbram,

to the meridian brightness of the Elysian fields;

> Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
> Purpureo ——

from the dreams of simple Nature to the dreams, alas! of Egyptian theology, and the philosophy of the Greeks. But the final dismission of the hero through the ivory gate, whence

Falsa ad cœlum mittunt insomnia manes,

seems to dissolve the whole enchantment, and leaves the reader in a state of cold and anxious scepticism. This most lame and impotent conclusion has been variously imputed to the taste or irreligion of Virgil; but, according to the more elaborate interpretation of Bishop Warburton, the descent to hell is not a false, but a mimic scene; which represents the initiation of Æneas, in the character of a lawgiver, to the Eleusinian mysteries. This hypothesis, a singular chapter in the Divine Legation of Moses, had been admitted by many as true; it was praised by all as ingenious; nor had it been exposed, in a space of thirty years, to a fair and critical discussion. The learning and the abilities of the author had raised him to a just eminence; but he reigned the dictator and tyrant of the world of literature. The real merit of Warburton was degraded by the pride and presumption with which he pronounced his infallible decrees; in his polemic writings he lashed his antagonists without mercy or moderation; and his servile flatterers (see the base and malignant Essay on the *Delicacy of Friendship*),[3] exalting the master critic far above Aristotle and Longinus, assaulted every modest dissenter who refused to consult the oracle, and to adore the idol. In a land of liberty such despotism must provoke a general opposition, and the zeal of opposition is seldom candid or impartial. A late professor of Oxford (Dr. Lowth), in a pointed and polished epistle[4] (August 31st, 1765), defended himself, and attacked the Bishop; and, whatsoever might be the merits of an insignificant controversy, his victory was clearly established by the silent confusion of Warburton and his slaves. *I* too, without any private offence, was ambitious of breaking a lance against the giant's shield; and in the beginning of the year 1770, my Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid were sent, without my name, to the press. In this short Essay, my first English publication, I aimed my strokes against the person and the hypothesis of Bishop Warburton. I proved, at least to my own satisfaction, *that* the ancient lawgivers did not invent the mysteries, and *that* Æneas was never invested

[3] By Hurd, afterwards Bishop of Worcester.—See Dr. Parr's Tracts by Warburton, and a Warburtonian.

[4] This letter of Lowth's is a masterpiece of its kind, and, if our calmer judgment is offended by the unseemly spectacle of two christian prelates engaged in this fierce intellectual gladiatorism, the chief blame must fall on the aggressor, Warburton.—M.

with the office of lawgiver: *that* there is not any argument, any circumstance, which can melt a fable into allegory, or remove the scene from the Lake Avernus to the Temple of Ceres: *that* such a wild supposition is equally injurious to the poet and the man: *that* if Virgil was not initiated he could not, if he were he would not, reveal the secrets of the initiation: *that* the anathema of Horace (*vetabo qui Cereris sacrum vulgarit, &c.*) at once attests his own ignorance and the innocence of his friend. As the Bishop of Gloucester and his party maintained a discreet silence, my critical disquisition was soon lost among the pamphlets of the day; but the public coldness was overbalanced to my feelings by the weighty approbation of the last and best editor of Virgil, Professor Heyne of Gottingen, who acquiesces in my confutation, and styles the unknown author *doctus .... et elegantissimus Britannus.* But I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing the favourable judgment of Mr. Hayley, himself a poet and a scholar: "An intricate hypothesis, twisted into a long and laboured chain of quotation and argument, the Dissertation on the Sixth Book of Virgil, remained some time unrefuted..... At length, a superior, but anonymous, critic arose, who, in one of the most judicious and spirited essays that our nation has produced on a point of classical literature, completely overturned this ill-founded edifice, and exposed the arrogance and futility of its assuming architect." He even condescends to justify an acrimony of style which had been gently blamed by the more unbiassed German; "*Paulo acrius quam velis .... perstrinxit.*"[5] But I cannot forgive myself the contemptuous treatment of a man who, with all his faults, was entitled to my esteem;[6] and I can less forgive, in a personal attack, the cowardly concealment of my name and character.

In the fifteen years between my Essay on the Study of Literature and the first volume of the Decline and Fall (1761-1776), this criticism on Warburton, and some articles in the Journal, were my

[5] The editor of the Warburtonian tracts, Dr. Parr (p. 192), considers the allegorical interpretation "as completely refuted in a most clear, elegant, and decisive work of criticism; which could not, indeed, derive authority from the greatest name, but to which the greatest name might with propriety have been affixed."—SHEFFIELD.

[6] The Divine Legation of Moses is a monument, already crumbling in the dust, of the vigour and weakness of the human mind. If Warburton's new argument proved anything, it would be a demonstration against the legislator who left his people without the knowledge of a future state. But some episodes of the work, on the Greek philosophy, the hieroglyphics of Egypt, &c., are entitled to the praise of learning, imagination, and discernment.[a]

[a] Warburton, with all his boldness and ingenuity, was not profoundly read in the Greek philosophers; he caught at single passages which favoured his own views, rather than fully represented the spirit and opinions of his authors. The great proof of the discernment of Warburton is his dim *second sight* of the modern discoveries in hieroglyphics.—M.

sole publications. It is more especially incumbent on me to mark the employment, or to confess the waste of time, from my travels to my father's death, an interval in which I was not diverted by any professional duties from the labours and pleasures of a studious life. 1. As soon as I was released from the fruitless task of the Swiss revolutions (1768), I began gradually to advance from the wish to the hope, from the hope to the design, from the design to the execution, of my historical work, of whose limits and extent I had yet a very inadequate notion. The classics, as low as Tacitus, the younger Pliny, and Juvenal, were my old and familiar companions. I insensibly plunged into the ocean of the Augustan history; and in the descending series I investigated, with my pen almost always in my hand, the original records, both Greek and Latin, from Dion Cassius to Ammianus Marcellinus, from the reign of Trajan to the last age of the Western Cæsars. The subsidiary rays of medals and inscriptions, of geography and chronology, were thrown on their proper objects; and I applied the collections of Tillemont, whose inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius, to fix and arrange within my reach the loose and scattered atoms of historical information. Through the darkness of the middle ages I explored my way in the Annals and Antiquities of Italy of the learned Muratori; and diligently compared them with the parallel or transverse lines of Sigonius and Maffei, Baronius and Pagi, till I almost grasped the ruins of Rome in the fourteenth century, without suspecting that this final chapter must be attained by the labour of six quartos and twenty years. Among the books which I purchased, the Theodosian Code, with the commentary of James Godefroy, must be gratefully remembered: I used it (and much I used it) as a work of history rather than of jurisprudence: but in every light it may be considered as a full and capacious repository of the political state of the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. As I believed, and as I still believe, that the propagation of the Gospel, and the triumph of the church, are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and contrasted the narratives and apologies of the Christians themselves, with the glances of candour or enmity which the Pagans have cast on the rising sects. The Jewish and Heathen testimonies, as they are collected and illustrated by Dr. Lardner, directed, without superseding, my search of the originals; and in an ample dissertation on the miraculous darkness of the passion, I privately drew my conclusions from the silence of an unbelieving age. I have assembled the preparatory studies, directly or indirectly relative to my history; but, in strict equity, they must be spread beyond this period of my life,

over the two summers (1771 and 1772) that elapsed between my father's death and my settlement in London. 2. In a free conversation with books and men it would be endless to enumerate the names and characters of all who are introduced to our acquaintance; but in this general acquaintance we may select the degrees of friendship and esteem. According to the wise maxim, *Multum legere potius quam multa*, I reviewed, again and again, the immortal works of the French and English, the Latin and Italian classics. My Greek studies (though less assiduous than I designed) maintained and extended my knowledge of that incomparable idiom. Homer and Xenophon were still my favourite authors; and I had almost prepared for the press an Essay on the Cyropædia, which, in my own judgment, is not unhappily laboured. After a certain age the new publications of merit are the sole food of the many; and the most austere student will be often tempted to break the line, for the sake of indulging his own curiosity, and of providing the topics of fashionable currency. A more respectable motive may be assigned for the third perusal of Blackstone's Commentaries, and a copious and critical abstract of that English work was my first serious production in my native language. 3. My literary leisure was much less complete and independent than it might appear to the eye of a stranger. In the hurry of London I was destitute of books; in the solitude of Hampshire I was not master of my time. My quiet was gradually disturbed by our domestic anxiety, and I should be ashamed of my unfeeling philosophy, had I found much time or taste for study in the last fatal summer (1770) of my father's decay and dissolution.

The disembodying of the militia at the close of the war (1763) had restored the Major (a new Cincinnatus) to a life of agriculture. His labours were useful, his pleasures innocent, his wishes moderate; and my father *seemed* to enjoy the state of happiness which is celebrated by poets and philosophers as the most agreeable to nature, and the least accessible to fortune.

> Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis
> (Ut prisca gens mortalium)
> Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
> Solutus omni fœnore.[7] HOR. *Epod.* ii.

But the last indispensable condition, the freedom from debt, was wanting to my father's felicity; and the vanities of his youth were severely punished by the solicitude and sorrow of his declining age. The first mortgage, on my return from Lausanne (1758), had

[7] Like the first mortals, blest is he,
From debts, and usury, and business free,
With his own team who ploughs the soil,
Which grateful once confess'd his father's toil. FRANCIS.

afforded him a partial and transient relief. The annual demand of interest and allowance was a heavy deduction from his income; the militia was a source of expense, the farm in his hands was not a profitable adventure, he was loaded with the costs and damages of an obsolete lawsuit; and each year multiplied the number and exhausted the patience of his creditors. Under these painful circumstances, I consented to an additional mortgage, to the sale of Putney, and to every sacrifice that could alleviate his distress. But he was no longer capable of a rational effort, and his reluctant delays postponed, not the evils themselves, but the remedies of those evils (*remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat*). The pangs of shame, tenderness, and self-reproach incessantly preyed on his vitals; his constitution was broken; he lost his strength and his sight: the rapid progress of a dropsy admonished him of his end, and he sunk into the grave on the 10th of November, 1770, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. A family tradition insinuates that Mr. William Law had drawn his pupil in the light and inconstant character of *Flatus*, who is ever confident and ever disappointed in the chace of happiness. But these constitutional failings were happily compensated by the virtues of the head and heart, by the warmest sentiments of honour and humanity. His graceful person, polite address, gentle manners, and unaffected cheerfulness, recommended him to the favour of every company; and in the change of times and opinions, his liberal spirit had long since delivered him from the zeal and prejudice of a Tory education. I submitted to the order of Nature; and my grief was soothed by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety.

As soon as I had paid the last solemn duties to my father, and obtained, from time and reason, a tolerable composure of mind, I began to form a plan of an independent life, most adapted to my circumstances and inclination. Yet so intricate was the net, my efforts were so awkward and feeble, that nearly two years (November, 1770—October, 1772) were suffered to elapse before I could disentangle myself from the management of the farm, and transfer my residence from Beriton to a house in London. During this interval I continued to divide my year between town and the country; but my new situation was brightened by hope; my stay in London was prolonged into the summer; and the uniformity of the summer was occasionally broken by visits and excursions at a distance from home. The gratification of my desires (they were not immoderate) has been seldom disappointed by the want of money or credit; my pride was never insulted by the visit of an importunate tradesman; and my transient anxiety for the past or future has been dis-

pelled by the studious or social occupation of the present hour. My conscience does not accuse me of any act of extravagance or injustice, and the remnant of my estate affords an ample and honourable provision for my declining age. I shall not expatiate on my economical affairs, which cannot be instructive or amusing to the reader. It is a rule of prudence, as well as of politeness, to reserve such confidence for the ear of a private friend, without exposing our situation to the envy or pity of strangers; for envy is productive of hatred, and pity borders too nearly on contempt. Yet I may believe, and even assert, that, in circumstances more indigent or more wealthy, I should never have accomplished the task, or acquired the fame, of an historian; that my spirit would have been broken by poverty and contempt; and that my industry might have been relaxed in the labour and luxury of a superfluous fortune.

I had now attained the first of earthly blessings, independence: I was the absolute master of my hours and actions: nor was I deceived in the hope that the establishment of my library in town would allow me to divide the day between study and society. Each year the circle of my acquaintance, the number of my dead and living companions, was enlarged. To a lover of books the shops and sales of London present irresistible temptations; and the manufacture of my history required a various and growing stock of materials. The militia, my travels, the House of Commons, the fame of an author, contributed to multiply my connections: I was chosen a member of the fashionable clubs; and, before I left England in 1783, there were few persons of any eminence in the literary or political world to whom I was a stranger.[8] It would most assuredly be in my power

[8] From the mixed, though polite, company of Boodle's, White's, and Brooks's, I must honourably distinguish a weekly society, which was instituted in the year 1764, and which still continues to flourish, under the title of the Literary Club.[a] (Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 415; Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides, p. 97.) The names of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Colman, Sir William Jones, Dr. Percy, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Adam Smith, Mr. Steevens, Mr. Dunning, Sir Joseph Banks,

[a] That great diary of the conversations held at "the Club," Boswell's Johnson, has little which relates to Gibbon. The following is the best:—

"Johnson, whose mind had been led to think of wild beasts, suddenly broke in upon the conversation with 'Pennant tells of bears.' When the first ludicrous effect from this ejaculation of the 'great Bear' had subsided, silence ensued. He (then) proceeded, 'We are told that the black bear is innocent; but I should not like to trust myself with him.' Mr. Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice, 'I should not much like to trust myself to you.' This piece of sarcastic pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities."—Croker's Boswell, vol. iii. p. 222.

"Lord Eliot informs me that, one day when Johnson and he were at dinner at a gentleman's house in London, after Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: 'Every man of education would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in the graces.' Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a

to amuse the reader with a gallery of portraits and a collection of anecdotes. But I have always condemned the practice of transforming a private memorial into a vehicle of satire or praise. By my own choice I passed in town the greatest part of the year; but whenever I was desirous of breathing the air of the country I possessed an hospitable retreat at Sheffield-place in Sussex, in the family of my valuable friend Mr. Holroyd, whose character, under the name of Lord Sheffield, has since been more conspicuous to the public.

No sooner was I settled in my house and library than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my history. At the outset all was dark and doubtful; even the title of the work, the true æra of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the

Dr. Warton and his brother Mr. Thomas Warton, Dr. Burney, &c., form a large and luminous constellation of British stars.[b]

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lady who knew Johnson well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: 'Don't you think, Madam (looking towards Johnson), that among all your acquaintance you could find *one* exception?' The lady smiled and seemed to acquiesce." —Croker's Boswell, iii. p. 419.

Note.—Mr. Colman, in his *Random Records* lately published, has given a lively sketch of the appearance and manners of Johnson and Gibbon in society:— "The learned Gibbon was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say *less* learned?) Johnson. Their manners and taste, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson, in his rusty brown suit and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology; and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon. Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant; the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the polish of the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets; Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys: Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises, by condescending once or twice in the evening to talk with me: the great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy; but it was done *more suo:* still his mannerism prevailed, still he tapped his snuff-box, still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole, nearly in the centre of his visage."—Vol. i. p. 121: Mr. Croker's Note.—M.

[b] See in Croker's Boswell, i. 528, the list of the club in the year 1829. Since that time, to 1839, the following members have been elected: — Lord Brougham, Rev. Dr. C. P. Burney, Earl of Caernarvon, Lord Dover, Lord F. Egerton, Hon. Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Right Hon. Sir C. E. Grey, Hudson Gurney, Esq., H. Galley Knight, Esq., T. B. Macaulay, Esq., Viscount Mahon, Rev. H. H. Milman, N. W. Senior, Esq., Sir Martin Archer Shee, Rev. Sydney Smith, Rev. W. Whewell.—M.

first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced, by three successive revisals, from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed, without any loss of facts or sentiments. An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends some will praise from politeness, and some will criticise from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event.

By the friendship of Mr. (now Lord) Eliot, who had married my first-cousin, I was returned at the general election for the borough of Liskeard. I took my seat at the beginning of the memorable contest between Great Britain and America, and supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not, perhaps, the interest, of the mother-country. After a fleeting illusive hope, prudence condemned me to acquiesce in the humble station of a mute. I was not armed by Nature and education with the intrepid energy of mind and voice,

Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.

Timidity was fortified by pride, and even the success of my pen discouraged the trial of my voice.[9] But I assisted at the debates of a free assembly; I listened to the attack and defence of eloquence and reason; I had a near prospect of the characters, views, and passions of the first men of the age. The cause of government was ably vindicated by *Lord North*, a statesman of spotless integrity, a consummate master of debate, who could wield with equal dexterity the arms of reason and of ridicule. He was seated on the Treasury-bench between his Attorney and Solicitor General, the two pillars of the law and state, *magis pares quam similes;* and the minister might indulge in a short slumber, whilst he was upholden on either hand by

[9] A French sketch of Mr. Gibbon's Life, written by himself, probably for the use of some foreign journalist or translator, contains no fact not mentioned in his English Life. He there describes himself with his usual candour. "Depuis huit ans il a assisté aux délibérations les plus importantes, mais il ne s'est jamais trouvé *le courage*, ni *le talent*, de parler dans une assemblée publique." This sketch was written before the publication of his three last volumes, as in closing it he says of his History, "Cette entreprise lui demande encore plusieurs années d'une application soutenue; mais quelqu'en soit le succès, il trouve dans cette application même un plaisir toujours varié et toujours renaissant."—SHEFFIELD.

the majestic sense of *Thurlow*, and the skilful eloquence of *Wedderburne*. From the adverse side of the house an ardent and powerful opposition was supported by the lively declamation of *Barré*, the legal acuteness of *Dunning*, the profuse and philosophic fancy of *Burke*, and the argumentative vehemence of *Fox*, who, in the conduct of a party, approved himself equal to the conduct of an empire. By such men every operation of peace and war, every principle of justice or policy, every question of authority and freedom, was attacked and defended; and the subject of the momentous contest was the union or separation of Great Britain and America. The eight sessions that I sat in parliament were a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian.

The volume of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first session, was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsley, I agreed, upon easy terms, with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. During this awful interval I was neither elated by the ambition of fame, nor depressed by the apprehension of contempt. My diligence and accuracy were attested by my own conscience. History is the most popular species of writing, since it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. I had chosen an illustrious subject. Rome is familiar to the schoolboy and the statesman; and my narrative was deduced from the last period of classical reading. I had likewise flattered myself that an age of light and liberty would receive, without scandal, an inquiry into the human *causes* of the progress and establishment of Christianity.

I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any *profane* critic. The favour of mankind is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of

the public and their favourite is productive of those warm sensibilities which at a second meeting can no longer be rekindled. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candour of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple.[1] A letter from Mr. Hume overpaid the labour of ten years; but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians.

That curious and original letter will amuse the reader, and his gratitude should shield my free communication from the reproach of vanity.

"Edinburgh, 18th March, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,

"As I ran through your volume of history with great avidity and impatience, I cannot forbear discovering somewhat of the same impatience in returning you thanks for your agreeable present, and expressing the satisfaction which the performance has given me. Whether I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I must regard the work as equally the object of esteem; and I own that, if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance from an Englishman in our age would have given me some surprise. You may smile at this sentiment, but, as it seems to me that your countrymen, for almost a whole generation, have given themselves up to barbarous and absurd faction, and have totally neglected all polite letters, I no longer expected any valuable production ever to come from them. I know it will give you pleasure (as it did me) to find that all the men of letters in this place concur in their admiration of your work, and in their anxious desire of your continuing it.

"When I heard of your undertaking (which was some time ago), I own I was a little curious to see how you would extricate yourself from the subject of your two last chapters. I think you have observed

[1] *Extract of a letter from Dr. Robertson to Mr. Strahan, dated Edinburgh College, March* 15, 1776.

* * * * "Since my last I have read Mr. Gibbon's History with much attention and great pleasure. It is a work of very high merit indeed. He possesses that industry of research, without which no man deserves the name of an historian. His narrative is perspicuous and interesting; his style is elegant and forcible, though in some passages I think rather too laboured, and in others too quaint. But these defects are amply compensated by the beauty of the general flow of language, and a very peculiar happiness in many of his expressions. I have traced him in many of his quotations (for experience has taught me to suspect the accuracy of my brother penmen), and I find he refers to no passage but what he has seen with his own eyes. I hope the book will be as successful as it deserves to be. I have not yet read the two last chapters, but am sorry, from what I have heard of them, that he has taken such a tone in them as will give great offence, and hurt the sale of the book."

There is something not quite honest in this prudential civility of Robertson.—M.

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a very prudent temperament; but it was impossible to treat the subject so as not to give grounds of suspicion against you, and you may expect that a clamour will arise. This, if anything, will retard your success with the public; for in every other respect your work is calculated to be popular. But among many other marks of decline, the prevalence of superstition in England prognosticates the fall of philosophy and decay of taste; and though nobody be more capable than you to revive them, you will probably find a struggle in your first advances.

"I see you entertain a great doubt with regard to the authenticity of the poems of Ossian. You are certainly right in so doing. It is indeed strange that any men of sense could have imagined it possible that above twenty thousand verses, along with numberless historical facts, could have been preserved by oral tradition during fifty generations, by the rudest, perhaps, of all the European nations, the most necessitous, the most turbulent, and the most unsettled. Where a supposition is so contrary to common sense, any positive evidence of it ought never to be regarded. Men run with great avidity to give their evidence in favour of what flatters their passions and their national prejudices. You are therefore over and above indulgent to us in speaking of the matter with hesitation.

"I must inform you that we are all very anxious to hear that you have fully collected the materials for your second volume, and that you are even considerably advanced in the composition of it. I speak this more in the name of my friends than in my own, as I cannot expect to live so long as to see the publication of it. Your ensuing volume will be more delicate than the preceding, but I trust in your prudence for extricating you from the difficulties; and, in all events, you have courage to despise the clamour of bigots.

"I am, with great regard,

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"DAVID HUME."

Some weeks afterwards I had the melancholy pleasure of seeing Mr. Hume in his passage through London; his body feeble, his mind firm. On the 25th of August of the same year (1776) he died, at Edinburgh, the death of a philosopher.

My second excursion to Paris was determined by the pressing invitation of M. and Madame Necker, who had visited England in the preceding summer. On my arrival I found M. Necker Director-

general of the finances, in the first bloom of power and popularity. His private fortune enabled him to support a liberal establishment; and his wife, whose talents and virtues I had long admired, was admirably qualified to preside in the conversation of her table and drawing-room. As their friend I was introduced to the best company of both sexes; to the foreign ministers of all nations, and to the first names and characters of France, who distinguished me by such marks of civility and kindness as gratitude will not suffer me to forget, and modesty will not allow me to enumerate. The fashionable suppers often broke into the morning hours; yet I occasionally consulted the Royal Library, and that of the Abbey of St. Germain, and in the free use of their books at home I had always reason to praise the liberality of those institutions. The society of men of letters I neither courted nor declined; but I was happy in the acquaintance of M. de Buffon, who united with a sublime genius the most amiable simplicity of mind and manners. At the table of my old friend M. de Forcemagne I was involved in a dispute with the Abbé de Mably; and his jealous irascible spirit revenged itself on a work which he was incapable of reading in the original.

As I might be partial in my own cause, I shall transcribe the words of an unknown critic, observing only that this dispute had been preceded by another on the English constitution at the house of the Countess de Froulay, an old Jansenist lady.

"Vous étiez chez M. de Forcemagne, mon cher Théodon, le jour que M. l'Abbé de Mably et M. Gibbon y dinèrent en grande compagnie. La conversation roula presque entièrement sur l'histoire. L'Abbé, étant un profond politique, la tourna sur l'administration quand on fut au dessert; et comme par caractère, par humeur, par l'habitude d'admirer Tite Live, il ne prise que le système républicain, il se mit à vanter l'excellence des républiques; bien persuadé que le savant Anglois l'approuveroit en tout, et admireroit la profondeur de génie qui avoit fait diviner tous ces avantages à un François. Mais M. Gibbon, instruit par l'expérience des inconvéniens d'un gouvernement populaire, ne fut point du tout de son avis, et il prit généreusement la défense du gouvernement monarchique. L'Abbé voulut le convaincre par Tite Live, et par quelques argumens tirés de Plutarque en faveur des Spartiates. M. Gibbon, doué de la mémoire la plus heureuse, et ayant tous les faits présens à la pensée, domina bientôt la conversation; l'Abbé se fâcha, il s'emporta, il dit des choses dures; l'Anglois, conservant le phlegme de son pays, prenoit ses avantages, et pressoit l'Abbé avec d'autant plus de succès que la colère le troubloit de plus en plus. La conversation s'échauffoit, et M. de Forcemagne la rompit en se levant de table, et en passant dans le

salon, où personne ne fut tenté de la renouer." *Supplément de la Manière d'écrire l'Histoire*, p. 125, &c.[2]

Nearly two years had elapsed between the publication of my first and the commencement of my second volume; and the causes must be assigned of this long delay. 1. After a short holiday I indulged my curiosity in some studies of a very different nature, a course of anatomy, which was demonstrated by Doctor Hunter, and some lessons of chemistry, which were delivered by Mr. Higgins. The principles of these sciences, and a taste for books of natural history, contributed to multiply my ideas and images; and the anatomist and chemist may sometimes track me in their own snow. 2. I dived, perhaps too deeply, into the mud of the Arian controversy; and many days of reading, thinking, and writing were consumed in the pursuit of a phantom. 3. It is difficult to arrange, with order and perspicuity, the various transactions of the age of Constantine; and so much was I displeased with the first essay, that I committed to the flames above fifty sheets. 4. The six months of Paris and pleasure must be deducted from the account. But when I resumed my task I felt my improvement; I was now master of my style and subject, and, while the measure of my daily performance was enlarged, I discovered less reason to cancel or correct. It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had given the last polish to my work. Shall I add, that I never found my mind more vigorous, nor my composition more happy, than in the winter hurry of society and parliament?

Had I believed that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow of Christianity; had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent would feel, or affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility; I might, perhaps, have softened the two invidious chapters, which would create many enemies, and conciliate few friends. But the shaft was shot, the alarm was sounded, and I could only rejoice that, if the voice of our priests was

[2] Of the voluminous writings of the Abbé de Mably (see his Éloge by the Abbé Brizard), the *Principes du droit public de l'Europe*, and the first part of the *Observations sur l'Histoire de France*, may be deservedly praised; and even the *Manière d'écrire l'Histoire* contains several useful precepts and judicious remarks. Mably was a lover of virtue and freedom; but his virtue was austere, and his freedom was impatient of an equal. Kings, magistrates, nobles, and successful writers, were the objects of his contempt, or hatred, or envy; but his illiberal abuse of Voltaire, Hume, Buffon, the Abbé Reynal, Dr. Robertson, and *tutti quanti*, can be injurious only to himself.

"Est-il rien de plus fastidieux (says the polite Censor) qu'un M. Gibbon, qui, dans son éternelle Histoire des Empereurs Romains, suspend à chaque instant son insipide et lente narration, pour vous expliquer la cause des faits que vous allez lire?" (Manière d'écrire l'Histoire, p. 184. See another passage, p. 280.) Yet I am indebted to the Abbé de Mably for two such advocates as the anonymous French Critic and my friend Mr. Hayley. (Hayley's Works, 8vo. edit., vol. ii. p. 261–263.)

clamorous and bitter, their hands were disarmed from the powers of persecution. I adhered to the wise resolution of trusting myself and my writings to the candour of the public, till Mr. Davies of Oxford presumed to attack, not the faith, but the fidelity, of the historian. *My Vindication*, expressive of less anger than contempt, amused for a moment the busy and idle metropolis; and the most rational part of the laity, and even of the clergy, appear to have been satisfied of my innocence and accuracy. I would not print this Vindication in quarto, lest it should be bound and preserved with the history itself. At the distance of twelve years I calmly affirm my judgment of Davies, Chelsum, &c. A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They however were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was indeed neglected; and I dare not boast the making Dr. Watson a bishop; he is a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit: but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davies, and of collating Dr. Apthorpe to an archiepiscopal living. Their success encouraged the zeal of Taylor[3] the Arian, and Milner[4] the Methodist, with many others, whom it would be difficult to remember, and tedious to rehearse.[5] The list of my adversaries, however, was graced with the more respectable names of Dr. Priestley, Sir David Dalrymple, and Dr. White; and every polemic, of either university, discharged his sermon or pamphlet against the impenetrable silence of the Roman historian. In his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Dr. Priestley threw down his two gauntlets to Bishop Hurd and Mr. Gibbon. I declined the challenge in a letter, exhorting my opponent to enlighten the world by his philosophical discoveries, and to remember that the merit of

[3] The stupendous title, *Thoughts on the Causes of the grand Apostasy*, at first agitated my nerves, till I discovered that it was the apostasy of the whole church, since the Council of Nice, from Mr. Taylor's private religion. His book is a thorough mixture of *high* enthusiasm and *low* buffoonery, and the Millennium is a fundamental article of his creed.

[4] From his grammar-school at Kingston-upon-Hull Mr. Joseph Milner pronounces an anathema against all rational religion. *His* faith is a divine taste, a spiritual inspiration; *his* church is a mystic and invisible body; the *natural* Christians, such as Mr. Locke, who believe and interpret the Scriptures, are, in his judgment, no better than profane infidels.

[5] It is remarkable that, in the midst of the indignation of the better part of the community at the publication of the first volumes of the Decline and Fall, the more distinguished theological writers of the country stood aloof, while the first ranks were filled by rash and feeble volunteers. Gibbon, with a single discharge from his ponderous artillery of learning and sarcasm, laid prostrate the whole disorderly squadron. The Davieses, the Chelsums, and the Travises shrunk back into their former insignificance. Their plan of attack was as misjudging as their conduct of it was imbecile. With a very slender stock of learning, hurried together for the occasion, they ventured to impeach the accuracy, and to condemn the false quotations, of a scholar whose mind was thoroughly saturated with every kind of knowledge which could bear upon the subject; and they could only make up in spleen and intemperance for their lamentable deficiency in all the true qualifications for defenders of Christianity. —M. in Quarterly Review, vol. l. p. 293.

his predecessor Servetus is now reduced to a single passage, which indicates the smaller circulation of the blood through the lungs, from and to the heart.[6] Instead of listening to this friendly advice, the dauntless philosopher of Birmingham continued to fire away his double battery against those who believed too little, and those who believed too much. *From my* replies he has nothing to hope or fear: but his Socinian shield has repeatedly been pierced by the mighty spear of Horsley, and his trumpet of sedition may at length awaken the magistrates of a free country.

The profession and rank of Sir David Dalrymple (now a Lord of Session) has given a more decent colour to his style. But he scrutinized each separate passage of the two chapters with the dry minuteness of a special pleader; and as he was always solicitous to make, he may have succeeded sometimes in finding, a flaw. In his Annals of Scotland, he has shown himself a diligent collector and an accurate critic.

I have praised, and I still praise, the eloquent sermons which were preached in St. Mary's pulpit at Oxford by Dr. White. If he assaulted me with some degree of illiberal acrimony, in such a place, and before such an audience, he was obliged to speak the language of the country. I smiled at a passage in one of his private letters to Mr. Badcock; "The part where we encounter Gibbon must be brilliant and striking."

In a sermon preached before the university of Cambridge, Dr. Edwards complimented a work "which can only perish with the language itself;" and esteems the author a formidable enemy. He is, indeed, astonished that more learning and ingenuity has not been shown in the defence of Israel; that the prelates and dignitaries of the church (alas, good man!) did not vie with each other whose stone should sink the deepest in the forehead of this Goliah.

"But the force of truth will oblige us to confess that, in the attacks which have been levelled against our sceptical historian, we can discover but slender traces of profound and exquisite erudition, of solid criticism, and accurate investigation; but we are too frequently disgusted by vague and inconclusive reasoning; by unseasonable banter and senseless witticisms; by imbittered bigotry and enthusiastic jargon; by futile cavils and illiberal invectives. Proud and elated by the weakness of his antagonists, he condescends not to handle the sword of controversy."[7]

Let me frankly own that I was startled at the first discharge of ecclesiastical ordnance; but as soon as I found that this empty noise was mischievous only in the intention, my fear was converted into

[6] Astruc de la Structure du Cœur, tom. i. 77, 79.
[7] Monthly Review Oct. 1790.

indignation; and every feeling of indignation or curiosity has long since subsided in pure and placid indifference.[8]

The prosecution of my history was soon afterwards checked by another controversy of a very different kind. At the request of the

[8] It may not be unuseful to give in this place the titles at least of the principal writings which Gibbon's bold and disingenuous attack on Christianity called forth. These were, I. 'Remarks on the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History. In a Letter to a Friend.' (See Art. 8.) II. 'An Apology for Christianity, in a Series of Letters addressed to Edward Gibbon, Esq. By R. Watson, D.D., F.R.S., and Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge (now Bishop of Llandaff).' 12mo. 1776. III. 'The History of the Establishment of Christianity, compiled from Jewish and Heathen Authors only. Translated from the French of Professor Bullet, &c. By William Salisbury, B.D. With Notes by the Translator, and some Strictures on Mr. Gibbon's Account of Christianity, and its first Teachers.' 8vo. 1776. IV. 'A Reply to the Reasonings of Mr. Gibbon in his History, &c., which seem to affect the Truth of Christianity, but have not been noticed in the Answer which Dr. Watson hath given to that Book. By Smyth Loftus, M.A., Vicar of Coolock.' 8vo. Dublin, 1778. V. 'Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity before its Civil Establishment. With Observations on a late History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. By East Apthorpe, M.A., Vicar of Croydon.' 8vo. 1778. VI. 'An Examination of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History, in which his View of the Progress of the Christian Religion is shown to be founded on the Misrepresentation of the Authors he cites; and numerous Instances of his Inaccuracy and Plagiarism are produced. By Henry Edward Davies, B.A. of Baliol College, Oxford.' 8vo. 1778. VII. 'A few Remarks on the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Relative chiefly to the Two last Chapters. By a Gentleman.' 8vo. VIII. 'Remarks on the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History. By James Chelsum, D.D., Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Worcester. The Second Edition enlarged.' 12mo. 1778. This is a second edition of the anonymous remarks mentioned in the first article, and contains additional remarks by Dr. Randolph, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.

Mr. Gibbon's Vindication now appeared under the title of 'A Vindication of some Passages in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. By the Author.' 8vo. 1779. This was immediately followed by, I. 'A short Appeal to the Public. By a Gentleman who is particularly addressed in the Postscript of the Vindication.' 8vo. 1779-1780. II. 'A Reply to Mr. Gibbon's Vindication, wherein the Charges brought against him in the Examination are confirmed, and further instances given of his Misrepresentation, Inaccuracy, and Plagiarism. By Henry Edward Davies, B.A. of Baliol College, Oxford.' 8vo. 1780. III. 'A Reply to Mr. Gibbon's Vindication, &c., containing a Review of the Errors still retained in these Chapters. By James Chelsum, D.D., &c.' 8vo. 1785.

The other most considerable works levelled at the history, upon general principles, were, I. 'Thoughts on the Nature of the grand Apostasy, with Reflections and Observations on the Fifteenth Chapter of Mr. Gibbon's History. By Henry Taylor, Rector of Crawley, and Vicar of Portsmouth in Hampshire, Author of Ben Mordecai's Apology for embracing Christianity.' 8vo. 1781-2. II. 'Gibbon's Account of Christianity considered; together with some Strictures on Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. By Joseph Milner, A.M., Master of the Grammar School of Kingston-upon-Hull.' 1781, 8vo. III. 'Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq., in Defence of the Authenticity of the 7th Verse of the 5th Chapter of the First Epistle of St. John. By George Travis, A.M.' 1784, 4to.[a] IV. 'An Inquiry into the Secondary Causes which Mr. Gibbon has assigned for the rapid growth of Christianity. By Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes).' 4to. 1786.—M.

[a] In his third volume Mr. Gibbon took an opportunity to deny the authenticity of the verse 1 John v. 7: "For there are three," &c. In support of this verse, Mr. Archdeacon Travis addressed 'Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq.,' which were answered by Mr. Professor Porson, and produced a controversy of considerable warmth.—M.

Lord Chancellor, and of Lord Weymouth, then Secretary of State, I vindicated, against the French manifesto, the justice of the British arms. The whole correspondence of Lord Stormont, our late ambassador at Paris, was submitted to my inspection, and the *Mémoire Justificatif*, which I composed in French, was first approved by the Cabinet Ministers, and then delivered as a state paper to the courts of Europe. The style and manner are praised by Beaumarchais himself, who, in his private quarrel, attempted a reply; but he flatters me by ascribing the memoir to Lord Stormont; and the grossness of his invective betrays the loss of temper and of wit; he acknowledged[9] that *le style ne seroit pas sans grace, ni la logique sans justesse*, &c., if the facts were true which he undertakes to disprove. For these facts my credit is not pledged; I spoke as a lawyer from my brief; but the veracity of Beaumarchais may be estimated from the assertion that France, by the treaty of Paris (1763), was limited to a certain number of ships of war. On the application of the Duke of Choiseul he was obliged to retract this daring falsehood.

Among the honourable connections which I had formed, I may justly be proud of the friendship of Mr. Wedderburne, at that time Attorney-General, who now illustrates the title of Lord Loughborough, and the office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. By his strong recommendation, and the favourable disposition of Lord North, I was appointed one of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations; and my private income was enlarged by a clear addition of between seven and eight hundred pounds a-year. The fancy of an hostile orator may paint in the strong colours of ridicule "the perpetual virtual adjournment, and the unbroken sitting vacation of the Board of Trade."[1] But it must be allowed that our duty was not intolerably severe, and that I enjoyed many days and weeks of repose without being called away from my library to the office. My acceptance of a place provoked some of the leaders of opposition, with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy; and I was most unjustly accused of deserting a party in which I had never enlisted.

The aspect of the next session of parliament was stormy and perilous; county meetings, petitions, and committees of correspondence, announced the public discontent; and instead of voting with a triumphant majority, the friends of government were often exposed to a struggle and sometimes to a defeat. The House of Commons

[9] Œuvres de Beaumarchais, tom. iii. p. 299, 355.

[1] I can never forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator, Mr. Burke, was heard by all sides of the house, and even by those whose existence he proscribed. (See Mr. Burke's speech on the Bill of Reform, p. 72–80.) The Lords of Trade blushed at their insignificancy, and Mr. Eden's appeal to the two thousand five hundred volumes of our Reports served only to excite a general laugh. I take this opportunity of certifying the correctness of Mr. Burke's printed speeches, which I have heard and read.

adopted Mr. Dunning's motion, "That the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished:" and Mr. Burke's bill of reform was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Our late president, the American Secretary of State, very narrowly escaped the sentence of proscription; but the unfortunate Board of Trade was abolished in the committee by a small majority (207 to 199) of eight votes. The storm, however, blew over for a time; a large defection of country gentlemen eluded the sanguine hopes of the patriots; the Lords of Trade were revived; administration recovered their strength and spirit; and the flames of London, which were kindled by a mischievous madman,[2] admonished all thinking men of the danger of an appeal to the people. In the premature dissolution which followed this session of parliament I lost my seat. Mr. Eliot was now deeply engaged in the measures of opposition, and the electors of Liskeard[3] are commonly of the same opinion as Mr. Eliot.

In this interval of my senatorial life I published the second and third volumes of the Decline and Fall. My ecclesiastical history still breathed the same spirit of freedom; but protestant zeal is more indifferent to the characters and controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. My obstinate silence had damped the ardour of the polemics. Dr. Watson, the most candid of my adversaries, assured me that he had no thoughts of renewing the attack, and my impartial balance of the virtues and vices of Julian was generally praised. This truce was interrupted only by some animadversions of the Catholics of Italy, and by some angry letters from Mr. Travis, who made me personally responsible for condemning, with the best critics, the spurious text of the three heavenly witnesses.

The piety or prudence of my Italian translator has provided an antidote against the poison of his original. The 5th and 7th volumes are armed with five letters from an anonymous divine to his friends, Foothead and Kirk, two English students at Rome; and this meritorious service is commended by Monsignor Stonor, a prelate of the same nation, who discovers much venom in the *fluid* and nervous style of Gibbon. The critical essay at the end of the third volume was furnished by the Abbate Nicola Spedalieri, whose zeal has gradually swelled to a more solid confutation in two quarto volumes. —Shall I be excused for not having read them?[4]

[2] Lord George Gordon.

[3] The borough which Mr. Gibbon had represented in parliament.

[4] I have observed in the Preface to the History that I never could find this translation. It is not in the British Museum or the Bodleian; and, on inquiry, I cannot find any London bookseller, not even Mr. Evans, who ever saw the book.—M.

The brutal insolence of Mr. Travis's challenge can only be excused by the absence of learning, judgment, and humanity; and to that excuse he has the fairest or foulest pretension. Compared with Archdeacon Travis, Chelsum and Davies assume the title of respectable enemies.

The bigoted advocate of popes and monks may be turned over even to the bigots of Oxford; and the wretched Travis still smarts under the lash of the merciless Porson. I consider Mr. Porson's answer to Archdeacon Travis as the most acute and accurate piece of criticism which has appeared since the days of Bentley. His strictures are founded in argument, enriched with learning, and enlivened with wit; and his adversary neither deserves nor finds any quarter at his hands. The evidence of the three heavenly witnesses would now be rejected in any court of justice: but prejudice is blind, authority is deaf, and our vulgar bibles will ever be polluted by this spurious text, "*sedet æternumque sedebit.*" The more learned ecclesiastics will indeed have the secret satisfaction of reprobating in the closet what they read in the church.

I perceived, and without surprise, the coldness and even prejudice of the town; nor could a whisper escape my ear, that, in the judgment of many readers, my continuation was much inferior to the original attempts. An author who cannot ascend will always appear to sink: envy was now prepared for my reception, and the zeal of my religious, was fortified by the motive of my political, enemies. Bishop Newton, in writing his own Life, was at full liberty to declare how much he himself and two eminent brethren were disgusted by Mr. Gibbon's prolixity, tediousness, and affectation. But the old man should not have indulged his zeal in a false and feeble charge against the historian,[5] who had faithfully and even cautiously rendered Dr.

[5] *Extract from Mr. Gibbon's Commonplace Book.*

Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol and Dean of St. Paul's, was born at Lichfield on the 21st of December, 1703, O.S. (1st January, 1704, N.S.), and died the 14th of February, 1782, in the 79th year of his age. A few days before his death he finished the memoirs of his own life, which have been prefixed to an edition of his posthumous works, first published in quarto, and since (1787) re-published in six volumes octavo. Pp. 173, 174. "Some books were published in 1781, which employed some of the Bishop's leisure hours, and during his illness. Mr. Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* he read throughout, but it by no means answered his expectation; for he found it rather a prolix and tedious performance, his matter uninteresting, and his style affected; his testimonies not to be depended upon, and his frequent scoffs at religion offensive to every sober mind. He had before been convicted of making false quotations, which should have taught him more prudence and caution. But, without examining his authorities, there is one which must necessarily strike every man who has read Dr. Burnet's Treatise *de Statu Mortuorum*. In vol. iii. p. 99 [4to. ed. c. xxviii. n. 81], Mr. G. has the following note:—'Burnet (*de S. M.*, p. 56–84) collects the opinions of the Fathers, as far as they assert the sleep or repose of human souls till the day of judgment. He afterwards exposes (p. 91) the inconveniences which must arise if they possessed a more active and sensible existence.' Who would not from

Burnet's meaning by the alternative of sleep or repose. That philosopher divine supposes that, in the period between death and the resurrection, human souls exist without a body, endowed with internal consciousness, but destitute of all active or passive connection with the external world. "Secundum communem dictionem sacræ scripturæ, mors dicitur somnus, et morientes dicuntur *obdormire*, quod innuere mihi videtur statum mortis esse statum quietis, silentii, et ἀεργασίας." (*De Statû Mortuorum*, ch. v. p. 98.)

I was however encouraged by some domestic and foreign testimonies of applause; and the second and third volumes insensibly rose in sale and reputation to a level with the first. But the public is seldom wrong; and I am inclined to believe that, especially in the beginning, they are more prolix and less entertaining than the first; my efforts had not been relaxed by success, and I had rather deviated into the opposite fault of minute and superfluous diligence. On the continent my name and writings were slowly diffused: a French translation of the first volume had disappointed the booksellers of Paris; and a passage in the third was construed as a personal reflection on the reigning monarch.[6]

Before I could apply for a seat at the general election the list was

hence infer that Dr. B. was an advocate for the sleep or insensible existence of the soul after death? whereas his doctrine is directly the contrary. He has employed some chapters in treating of the state of human souls in the interval between death and the resurrection; and after various proofs, from reason, from scripture, and the Fathers, his conclusions are, that human souls exist after their separation from the body, that they are in a good or evil state according to their good or ill behaviour, but that neither their happiness nor their misery will be complete or perfect before the day of judgment. His argumentation is thus summed up at the end of the 4th chapter. — *Ex quibus constat primo, animas superesse extincto corpore; secundo, bonas bene, malas male sè habituras; tertio, nec illis summam felicitatem, nec his summam miseriam, accessuram esse ante diem judicii.*" (The Bishop's reading the whole was a greater compliment to the work than was paid to it by two of the most eminent of his brethren for their learning and station. The one entered upon it, but was soon wearied, and laid it aside in disgust: the other returned it upon the bookseller's hands; and it is said that Mr. G. himself happened unluckily to be in the shop at the same time.)

Does the Bishop comply with his own precept in the next page? (p. 175.) "Old age should lenify, should soften men's manners, and make them more mild and gentle; but often has the contrary effect, hardens their hearts, and makes them more sour and crabbed." — He is speaking of Dr. Johnson.

Have I ever insinuated that preferment-hunting is the great occupation of an ecclesiastical life? (Memoirs, passim); that a minister's influence and a bishop's patronage are sometimes pledged eleven deep? (p. 151); that a prebendary considers the audit week as the better part of the year? (p. 127); or that the most eminent of priests, the pope himself, would change their religion, if anything better could be offered them? (p. 56.) Such things are more than insinuated in the Bishop's Life, which afforded some scandal to the church, and some diversion to the profane laity.

[6] It may not be generally known that Louis the Sixteenth is a great reader, and a reader of English books. On perusing a passage of my History which seems to compare him to Arcadius or Honorius, he expressed his resentment to the Prince of B....., from whom the intelligence was conveyed to me. I shall neither disclaim the allusion, nor examine the likeness; but the situation of the late King of France excludes all suspicion of flattery; and I am ready to declare that the concluding observations of my third volume were written before his accession to the throne.

already full; but Lord North's promise was sincere, his recommendation was effectual, and I was soon chosen on a vacancy for the borough of Lymington, in Hampshire. In the first session of the new parliament the administration stood their ground; their final overthrow was reserved for the second. The American war had once been the favourite of the country: the pride of England was irritated by the resistance of her colonies, and the executive power was driven by national clamour into the most vigorous and coercive measures. But the length of a fruitless contest, the loss of armies, the accumulation of debt and taxes, and the hostile confederacy of France, Spain, and Holland, indisposed the public to the American war, and the persons by whom it was conducted; the representatives of the people followed, at a slow distance, the changes of their opinion; and the ministers, who refused to bend, were broken by the tempest. As soon as Lord North had lost, or was about to lose, a majority in the House of Commons, he surrendered his office, and retired to a private station, with the tranquil assurance of a clear conscience and a cheerful temper: the old fabric was dissolved, and the posts of government were occupied by the victorious and veteran troops of opposition. The lords of trade were not immediately dismissed, but the board itself was abolished by Mr. Burke's bill, which decency had compelled the patriots to revive; and I was stripped of a convenient salary, after having enjoyed it about three years.

So flexible is the title of my History, that the final æra might be fixed at my own choice: and I long hesitated whether I should be content with the three volumes, the fall of the Western empire, which fulfilled my first engagement with the public. In this interval of suspense, nearly a twelvemonth, I returned by a natural impulse to the Greek authors of antiquity; I read with new pleasure the Iliad and the Odyssey, the Histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, a large portion of the tragic and comic theatre of Athens, and many interesting dialogues of the Socratic school. Yet in the luxury of freedom I began to wish for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book, and an object to every inquiry: the preface of a new edition announced my design, and I dropped without reluctance from the age of Plato to that of Justinian. The original texts of Procopius and Agathias supplied the events and even the characters of his reign; but a laborious winter was devoted to the Codes, the Pandects, and the modern interpreters, before I presumed to form an abstract of the civil law. My skill was improved by practice, my diligence perhaps was quickened by the loss of office; and, excepting the last chapter, I had finished the fourth volume before I sought a retreat on the banks of the Leman Lake.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to expatiate on the public or

secret history of the times: the schism which followed the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the appointment of the Earl of Shelburne, the resignation of Mr. Fox, and his famous coalition with Lord North. But I may assert with some degree of assurance, that in their political conflict those great antagonists had never felt any personal animosity to each other, that their reconciliation was easy and sincere, and that their friendship has never been clouded by the shadow of suspicion or jealousy. The most violent or venal of their respective followers embraced this fair occasion of revolt, but their alliance still commanded a majority in the House of Commons; the peace was censured, Lord Shelburne resigned, and the two friends knelt on the same cushion to take the oath of secretary of state. From a principle of gratitude I adhered to the coalition; my vote was counted in the day of battle, but I was overlooked in the division of the spoil. There were many claimants more deserving and importunate than myself! the board of trade could not be restored; and, while the list of places was curtailed, the number of candidates was doubled. An easy dismission to a secure seat at the board of customs or excise was promised on the first vacancy: but the chance was distant and doubtful; nor could I solicit with much ardour an ignoble servitude, which would have robbed me of the most valuable of my studious hours:[7] at the same time the tumult of London, and the attendance on parliament, were grown more irksome; and, without some additional income, I could not long or prudently maintain the style of expense to which I was accustomed.

From my early acquaintance with Lausanne I had always cherished a secret wish that the school of my youth might become the retreat of my declining age. A moderate fortune would secure the blessings of ease, leisure, and independence: the country, the people, the manners, the language, were congenial to my taste; and I might indulge the hope of passing some years in the domestic society of a friend. After travelling with several Englishmen,[8] Mr. Deyverdun was

[7] About the same time, it being in contemplation to send a secretary of embassy to Paris, Mr. Gibbon was a competitor for that office. The credit of being distinguished and stopped by government when he was leaving England, the salary of 1200*l.* a-year, the society of Paris, and the hope of a future provision for life, disposed him to renounce, though with much reluctance, an agreeable scheme on the point of execution; to engage, without experience, in a scene of business which he never liked; to give himself a master, or at least a principal, of an unknown, perhaps an unmanjable character: to which might be added the danger of the recal of the ambassador, or the change of ministry. Mr. Anthony Storer was preferred. Mr. Gibbon was somewhat indignant at the preference; but he never knew that it was the act of his friend Mr. Fox, contrary to the solicitations of Mr. Craufurd, and other of his friends.—SHEFFIELD.

[8] Sir Richard Worsley, Lord Chesterfield, Frederick Lord Midleton, and Mr Hume, brother to Sir Abraham.

now settled at home, in a pleasant habitation, the gift of his deceased aunt: we had long been separated, we had long been silent; yet in my first letter I exposed, with the most perfect confidence, my situation, my sentiments, and my designs. His immediate answer was a warm and joyful acceptance; the picture of our future life provoked my impatience; and the terms of arrangement were short and simple, as he possessed the property, and I undertook the expense of our common house. Before I could break my English chain it was incumbent on me to struggle with the feelings of my heart, the indolence of my temper, and the opinion of the world, which unanimously condemned this voluntary banishment. In the disposal of my effects, the library, a sacred deposit, was alone excepted. As my post-chaise moved over Westminster-bridge I bade a long farewell to the "fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ." My journey, by the direct road through France, was not attended with any accident, and I arrived at Lausanne nearly twenty years after my second departure. Within less than three months the coalition struck on some hidden rocks: had I remained on board I should have perished in the general shipwreck.

Since my establishment at Lausanne more than seven years have elapsed; and if every day has not been equally soft and serene, not a day, not a moment, has occurred in which I have repented of my choice. During my absence, a long portion of human life, many changes had happened: my elder acquaintance had left the stage; virgins were ripened into matrons, and children were grown to the age of manhood. But the same manners were transmitted from one generation to another: my friend alone was an inestimable treasure; my name was not totally forgotten, and all were ambitious to welcome the arrival of a stranger and the return of a fellow-citizen. The first winter was given to a general embrace, without any nice discrimination of persons and characters. After a more regular settlement, a more accurate survey, I discovered three solid and permanent benefits of my new situation. 1. My personal freedom had been somewhat impaired by the House of Commons and the Board of Trade; but I was now delivered from the chain of duty and dependence, from the hopes and fears of political adventure: my sober mind was no longer intoxicated by the fumes of party, and I rejoiced in my escape as often as I read of the midnight debates which preceded the dissolution of parliament. 2. My English economy had been that of a solitary bachelor, who might afford some occasional dinners. In Switzerland I enjoyed, at every meal, at every hour, the free and pleasant conversation of the friend of my youth; and my daily table was always provided for the reception of one or two extra-

ordinary guests. Our importance in society is less a positive than a relative weight: in London I was lost in the crowd; I ranked with the first families of Lausanne, and my style of prudent expense enabled me to maintain a fair balance of reciprocal civilities. 3. Instead of a small house between a street and a stable-yard, I began to occupy a spacious and convenient mansion, connected on the north side with the city, and open on the south to a beautiful and boundless horizon. A garden of four acres had been laid out by the taste of Mr. Deyverdun: from the garden a rich scenery of meadows and vineyards descends to the Leman Lake, and the prospect far beyond the Lake is crowned by the stupendous mountains of Savoy. My books and my acquaintance had been first united in London; but this happy position of my library in town and country was finally reserved for Lausanne. Possessed of every comfort in this triple alliance, I could not be tempted to change my habitation with the changes of the seasons.

My friends had been kindly apprehensive that I should not be able to exist in a Swiss town at the foot of the Alps, after having so long conversed with the first men of the first cities of the world. Such lofty connections may attract the curious, and gratify the vain; but I am too modest, or too proud, to rate my own value by that of my associates; and, whatsoever may be the fame of learning or genius, experience has shown me that the cheaper qualifications of politeness and good sense are of more useful currency in the commerce of life. By many, conversation is esteemed as a theatre or a school: but, after the morning has been occupied by the labours of the library, I wish to unbend rather than to exercise my mind; and in the interval between tea and supper I am far from disdaining the innocent amusement of a game at cards. Lausanne is peopled by a numerous gentry, whose companionable idleness is seldom disturbed by the pursuits of avarice or ambition: the women, though confined to a domestic education, are endowed for the most part with more taste and knowledge than their husbands and brothers: but the decent freedom of both sexes is equally remote from the extremes of simplicity and refinement. I shall add, as a misfortune rather than a merit, that the situation and beauty of the Pays de Vaud, the long habits of the English, the medical reputation of Dr. Tissot, and the fashion of viewing the mountains and *Glaciers*, have opened us on all sides to the incursions of foreigners. The visits of Mr. a Madame Necker, of Prince Henry of Prussia, and of Mr. Fox form some pleasing exceptions; but, in general, Lausanne peared most agreeable in my eyes when we have been aba our own society. I had frequently seen Mr. Necker, in

of 1784, at a country house near Lausanne, where he composed his Treatise on the Administration of the Finances. I have since, in October 1790, visited him in his present residence, the castle and barony of Copet, near Geneva. Of the merits and measures of that statesman various opinions may be entertained; but all impartial men must agree in their esteem of his integrity and patriotism.

In the month of August 1784, Prince Henry of Prussia, in his way to Paris, passed three days at Lausanne. His military conduct has been praised by professional men; his character has been vilified by the wit and malice of a demon;[9] but I was flattered by his affability, and entertained by his conversation.

In his tour to Switzerland (September 1788) Mr. Fox gave me two days of free and private society. He seemed to feel, and even to envy, the happiness of my situation; while I admired the powers of a superior man, as they are blended in his attractive character with the softness and simplicity of a child. Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempt from the taint of malevolence, vanity, or falsehood.

My transmigration from London to Lausanne could not be effected without interrupting the course of my historical labours. The hurry of my departure, the joy of my arrival, the delay of my tools, suspended their progress; and a full twelvemonth was lost before I could resume the thread of regular and daily industry. A number of books most requisite and least common had been previously selected; the academical library of Lausanne, which I could use as my own, contained at least the fathers and councils; and I have derived some occasional succour from the public collections of Berne and Geneva. The fourth volume was soon terminated, by an abstract of the controversies of the Incarnation, which the learned Dr. Prideaux was apprehensive of exposing to profane eyes. It had been the original design of the learned Dean Prideaux to write the history of the ruin of the Eastern Church. In this work it would have been necessary not only to unravel all those controversies which the Christians made about the hypostatical union, but also to unfold all the niceties and subtle notions which each sect entertained concerning it. The pious historian was apprehensive of exposing that incomprehensible mystery to the cavils and objections of unbelievers; and he durst not, "seeing the nature of this book, venture it abroad in so wanton and lewd age."[1]

In the fifth and sixth volumes the revolutions of the empire and world are most rapid, various, and instructive; and the Greek or

[9] Mémoire Secret de la Cour de Berlin, par Mirabeau.
[1] See Preface to the Life of Mahomet, p. 10, 11.

Roman historians are checked by the hostile narratives of the barbarians of the East and the West.[2]

It was not till after many designs and many trials that I preferred, as I still prefer, the method of grouping my picture by nations; and the seeming neglect of chronological order is surely compensated by the superior merits of interest and perspicuity. The style of the first volume is, in my opinion, somewhat crude and elaborate; in the second and third it is ripened into ease, correctness, and numbers; but in the three last I may have been seduced by the facility of my pen, and the constant habit of speaking one language and writing another may have infused some mixture of Gallic idioms. Happily for my eyes, I have always closed my studies with the day, and commonly with the morning; and a long, but temperate, labour has been accomplished, without fatiguing either the mind or body; but when I computed the remainder of my time and my task, it was apparent that, according to the season of publication, the delay of a month would be productive of that of a year. I was now straining for the goal, and in the last winter many evenings were borrowed from the social pleasures of Lausanne. I could now wish that a pause, an interval, had been allowed for a serious revisal.

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts, which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen

[2] I have followed the judicious precept of the Abbé de Mably (Manière d'écrire l'Histoire, p. 110), who advises the historian not to dwell too minutely on the decay of the Eastern empire; but to consider the barbarian conquerors as a more worthy subject of his narrative. "Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.[3]

I cannot help recollecting a much more extraordinary fact, which is affirmed of himself by Retif de la Bretonne, a voluminous and original writer of French novels, He laboured, and may still labour, in the humble office of corrector to a printing-house; but this office enabled him to transport an entire volume from his mind to the press; and his work was given to the public without ever having been written by the pen.

After a quiet residence of four years, during which I had never moved ten miles from Lausanne, it was not without some reluctance and terror that I undertook, in a journey of two hundred leagues, to cross the mountains and the sea. Yet this formidable adventure was achieved without danger or fatigue; and at the end of a fortnight I found myself in Lord Sheffield's house and library, safe, happy, and at home. The character of my friend (Mr. Holroyd) had recommended him to a seat in parliament for Coventry, the command of a regiment of light dragoons, and an Irish peerage. The sense and spirit of his political writings have decided the public opinion on the great questions of our commercial interest with America and Ireland.[4]

The sale of his 'Observations on the American States' was diffusive, their effect beneficial; the Navigation Act, the palladium of Britain, was defended, and perhaps saved, by his pen; and he proves, by the weight of fact and argument, that the mother-country may survive and flourish after the loss of America. My friend has never cultivated the arts of composition; but his materials are copious and correct, and he leaves on his paper the clear impression of an active and vigorous mind. His 'Observations on the Trade, Manufactures, and present State of Ireland' were intended to guide the industry, to correct the prejudices, and to assuage the passions of a country which seemed to forget that she could be free and prosperous only by a friendly connection with Great Britain. The concluding observations are written with so much ease and spirit that they may be read by those who are the least interested in the subject.

[3] *Extract from Mr. Gibbon's Commonplace Book.*

The IVth volume of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire	begun March 1, 1782—ended June 1784.
The Vth volume	begun July 1784—ended May 1, 1786.
The VIth volume	begun May 18, 1786—ended June 27, 1787.

These three volumes were sent to press August 15, 1787, and the whole impression was concluded April following.

[4] Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by John Lord Sheffield, the 6th edition, London, 1784, in 8vo.

He fell[5] (1784) with the unpopular coalition; but his merit has been acknowledged at the last general election, 1790, by the honourable invitation and free choice of the city of Bristol. During the whole time of my residence in England I was entertained at Sheffield-place and in Downing-street by his hospitable kindness; and the most pleasant period was that which I passed in the domestic society of the family. In the larger circle of the metropolis I observed the country and the inhabitants with the knowledge, and without the prejudices, of an Englishman; but I rejoiced in the apparent increase of wealth and prosperity, which might be fairly divided between the spirit of the nation and the wisdom of the minister. All party resentment was now lost in oblivion; since I was no man's rival, no man was my enemy. I felt the dignity of independence, and, as I asked no more, I was satisfied with the general civilities of the world. The house in London which I frequented with most pleasure and assiduity was that of Lord North. After the loss of power and of sight he was still happy in himself and his friends, and my public tribute of gratitude and esteem could no longer be suspected of any interested motive. Before my departure from England I was present at the august spectacle of Mr. Hastings's trial in Westminster Hall. It is not my province to absolve or condemn the Governor of India;[6] but Mr. Sheridan's eloquence commanded my applause; nor could I hear without emotion the personal compliment which he paid me in the presence of the British nation.[7]

From this display of genius, which blazed four successive days, I shall stoop to a very mechanical circumstance. As I was waiting in the manager's box I had the curiosity to inquire of the shorthand-writer how many words a ready and rapid orator might pronounce in an hour? From 7000 to 7500 was his answer. The medium of 7200 will afford 120 words in a minute, and two words in each second. But this computation will only apply to the English language.

As the publication of my three last volumes was the principal object, so it was the first care, of my English journey. The previous

[5] It is not obvious from whence he fell; he never held nor desired any office of emolument whatever, unless his military commissions, and the command of a regiment of light dragoons, which he raised himself, and which was disbanded on the peace in 1783, should be deemed such.

[6] He considered the *persecution* of that highly respectable person to have arisen from party views.—SHEFFIELD.

[7] He said the facts that made up the volume of narrative were unparalleled in atrociousness, and that nothing equal in criminality was to be traced, either in ancient or modern history, in the correct periods of Tacitus or the luminous page of Gibbon.[a]—*Morning Chronicle*, June 14, 1788.

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[a] Did no "good-natured friend" impart to Gibbon the malicious turn which the wit, in private, gave to this "personal compliment"—"I meant to say *voluminous*"?—M.

arrangements with the bookseller and the printer were settled in my passage through London, and the proofs which I returned more correct were transmitted every post from the press to Sheffield-place. The length of the operation, and the leisure of the country, allowed some time to review my manuscript. Several rare and useful books, the Assises de Jerusalem, Ramusius de Bello C. P^aro, the Greek Acts of the Synod of Florence, the Statuta Urbis Romæ, &c., were procured, and I introduced in their proper places the supplements which they afforded. The impression of the fourth volume had consumed three months. Our common interest required that we should move with a quicker pace; and Mr. Strahan fulfilled his engagement, which few printers could sustain, of delivering every week three thousand copies of nine sheets. The day of publication was, however, delayed, that it might coincide with the fifty-first anniversary of my own birthday; the double festival was celebrated by a cheerful literary dinner at Mr. Cadell's house; and I seemed to blush while they read an elegant compliment from Mr. Hayley,[8]

Occasional Stanzas, by Mr. Hayley, read after the dinner at Mr. Cadell's, May 8, 1788; being the day of the publication of the three last volumes of Mr. Gibbon's History, and his birthday.

GENII of ENGLAND, and of ROME!
In mutual triumph here assume
The honours each may claim!
This social scene with smiles survey!
And consecrate the festive day
To Friendship and to Fame!

Enough, by Desolation's tide,
With anguish, and indignant pride,
Has ROME bewail'd her fate;
And mourn'd that Time, in Havoc's hour,
Defaced each monument of power
To speak her truly great:

O'er maim'd POLYBIUS, just and sage,
O'er LIVY'S mutilated page,
How deep was her regret!
Touch'd by this Queen, in ruin grand,
See! Glory, by an English hand,
Now pays a mighty debt:

Lo! sacred to the ROMAN Name,
And raised, like ROME'S immortal Fame,
By Genius and by Toil,
The splendid Work is crown'd to-day,
On which Oblivion ne'er shall prey,
Not Envy make her spoil!

ENGLAND, exult! and view not now
With jealous glance each nation's brow,
Where History's palm has spread!
In every path of liberal art,
Thy Sons to prime distinction start,
And no superior dread.

Science

whose poetical talents had more than once been employed in the praise of his friend. Before Mr. Hayley inscribed with my name his epistles on history I was not acquainted with that amiable man and elegant poet. He afterwards thanked me in verse for my second and third volumes;[9] and in the summer of 1781 the Roman Eagle[10]

Science for thee a NEWTON raised;
For thy renown a SHAKSPEARE blazed,
Lord of the drama's sphere!
In different fields to equal praise
See History now thy GIBBON raise
To shine without a peer!

Eager to honour living worth,
And bless to-day the double birth,
That proudest joy may claim,
Let artless Truth this homage pay,
And consecrate the festive day
To Friendship and to Fame!

[9] SONNET TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ., ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS SECOND AND THIRD VOLUMES, 1781.

With proud delight th' imperial founder gazed
On the new beauty of his second Rome,
When on his eager eye rich temples blazed,
And his fair city rose in youthful bloom:
A pride more noble may thy heart assume,
O GIBBON! gazing on thy growing work,
In which, constructed for a happier doom,
No hasty marks of vain ambition lurk:
Thou may'st deride both Time's destructive sway,
And baser Envy's beauty-mangling dirk;
Thy gorgeous fabric, plann'd with wise delay,
Shall baffle foes more savage than the Turk;
As ages multiply, its fame shall rise,
And earth must perish ere its splendour dies.

[10] A CARD OF INVITATION TO MR. GIBBON AT BRIGHTHELMSTONE, 1781.

An English sparrow, pert and free,
Who chirps beneath his native tree,
Hearing the Roman eagle's near,
And feeling more respect than fear,
Thus, with united love and awe,
Invites him to his shed of straw.
Tho' he is but a twittering sparrow,
The field he hops in rather narrow,
When nobler plumes attract his view
He ever pays them homage due;
He looks with reverential wonder
On him whose talons bear the thunder;
Nor could the jackdaws e'er inveigle
His voice to vilify the eagle,
Tho', issuing from the holy towers
In which they build their warmest bowers,
Their sovereign's haunt they slily search,
In hopes to catch him on his perch
(For Pindar says, beside his God
The thunder-bearing bird will nod),
Then, peeping round his still retreat,
They pick from underneath his feet
Some molted feather he lets fall,
And swear he cannot fly at all.—— Lord

(a proud title) accepted the invitation of the English Sparrow, who chirped in the groves of Eartham, near Chichester. As most of the former purchasers were naturally desirous of completing their sets, the sale of the quarto edition was quick and easy; and an octavo size was printed to satisfy at a cheaper rate the public demand. The conclusion of my work was generally read, and variously judged. The style has been exposed to much academical criticism; a religious clamour was revived, and the reproach of indecency has been loudly echoed by the rigid censors of morals. I never could understand the clamour that has been raised against the indecency of my three last volumes.[1] 1. An equal degree of freedom in the former part, especially in the first volume, had passed without reproach. 2. I am justified in painting the manners of the times; the vices of Theodora form an essential feature in the reign and character of Justinian; and the most naked tale in my history is told by the Rev. Mr. Joseph Warton, an instructor of youth (Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, p. 322-324). 3. My English text is chaste, and all licentious passages are left in the obscurity of a learned language. *Le Latin dans ses mots brave l'honnêteté*, says the correct Boileau, in a country and idiom more scrupulous than our own. Yet, upon the whole, the History of the Decline and Fall seems to have struck root both at home and abroad, and may perhaps a hundred years hence still continue to be abused. I am less flattered by Mr. Porson's high encomium on the style and spirit of my History than I am satisfied with his honourable testimony to my attention, diligence, and accuracy; those humble virtues which religious zeal had most audaciously denied. The sweetness of his praise is tempered by a reasonable mixture of acid.[2] (2) As the book may not be common in England, I

Lord of the sky! whose pounce can tear
These croakers, that infest the air,
Trust him! the sparrow loves to sing
The praise of thy imperial wing!
He thinks thou'lt deem him, on his word,
An honest, though familiar bird;
And hopes thou soon wilt condescend
To look upon thy little friend;
That he may boast around his grove
A visit from the bird of Jove.

Gibbon's manifest delight at the flat adulation of his poetical admirer is a better proof of his gratitude than taste. —M.

(2) See his preface, p. 28, 32.

[1] The editor cannot agree in this exculpation of Gibbon, but to justify his opinion it would be necessary to direct particular attention to passages which are better left unnoticed.—M.

[2] "Mr. Gibbon's industry is indefatigable; his accuracy scrupulous; his reading, which is sometimes ostentatiously displayed, immense; his attention always awake; his memory retentive; his style

shall transcribe my own character from the Bibliotheca Historica of Meuselius,[3] a learned and laborious German:—"Summis ævi nostri historicis Gibbonus sine dubio adnumerandus est. Inter Capitolii ruinas stans primum hujus operis scribendi consilium cepit. Florentissimos vitæ annos colligendo et laborando eidem impendit. Enatum inde monumentum ære perennius, licet passim appareant sinistrè dicta, minus perfecta, veritati non satis consentanea. Videmus quidem ubique fere studium scrutandi veritatemque scribendi maximum: tamen sine Tillemontio duce, ubi scilicet hujus historia finitur, sæpius noster titubat atque hallucinatur. Quod vel maxime fit, ubi de rebus Ecclesiasticis vel de juris prudentiâ Romanâ (tom. iv.) tradit, et in aliis locis. Attamen nævi hujus generis haud impediunt quo minus operis summam et οἰκονομίαν præclarè dispositam, delectum rerum sapientissimum, argutum quoque interdum, dictionemque seu stylum historico æque ac philosopho dignissimum, et vix à quoque alio Anglo, Humio ac Robertsono haud exceptis (*præreptum?*), vehementer laudemus, atque sæculo nostro de hujusmodi historiâ gratulemur..... Gibbonus adversarios cum in tum extra patriam nactus est, quia propagationem religionis Christianæ, non, ut vulgo fieri solet, aut more Theologorum, sed ut Historicum et Philosophum decet, exposuerat."

The French, Italian, and German translations have been executed with various success; but, instead of patronising, I should willingly suppress such imperfect copies, which injure the character while

[3] Vol. iv., part 1, p. 342, 344.

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emphatic and expressive; his sentences harmonious; his reflections are just and profound; nor does his humanity ever slumber, unless when women are ravished, or the Christians persecuted. He often makes, when he cannot find, an occasion to insult our religion, which he hates so cordially that he might seem to revenge some personal injury. Such is his eagerness in the cause, that he stoops to the most despicable pun, or to the most awkward perversion of language, for the pleasure of turning the Scripture into ribaldry, or of calling Jesus an impostor. Though his style is in general correct and elegant, he sometimes draws out 'the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.' In endeavouring to avoid vulgar terms he too frequently dignifies trifles, and clothes common thoughts in a splendid dress that would be rich enough for the noblest ideas. In short, we are too often reminded of that great man, Mr. Prig the auctioneer, whose manner was so inimitably fine, that he had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael.

"A less pardonable fault is that rage for indecency which pervades the whole work, but especially the last volumes; and to the honour of his consistency, this is the same man who is so prudish that he does not call Belisarius a cuckold, because it is too bad a word for a decent historian to use. If the history were anonymous, I should guess that those disgraceful obscenities were written by some debauchee, who, having from age, or accident, or excess, survived the practices of lust, still indulged himself in the luxury of speculation, and exposed the impotent imbecility, after he had lost the vigour, of his passions."—Porson, Letters to Travis.

Gibbon showed some forbearance in his allusion to the "bitter-sweet" of this criticism. The professor's own habits, and, unless he is much belied, the style of his conversation, laid him open to some retaliation, when he assumed the tone of a moral and religious censor.—M.

they propagate the name of the author. The first volume had been feebly, though faithfully, translated into French by M. Le Clerc de Septchenes, a young gentleman of a studious character and liberal fortune. After his decease the work was continued by two manufacturers of Paris, MM. Desmuniers and Cantwell; but the former is now an active member of the National Assembly, and the undertaking languishes in the hands of his associate.[4] The superior merit of the interpreter, or his language, inclines me to prefer the Italian version: but I wish that it were in my power to read the German, which is praised by the best judges. The Irish pirates are at once my friends and my enemies. But I cannot be displeased with the two numerous and correct impressions which have been published for the use of the Continent at Basil in Switzerland.[5] The conquests of our language and literature are not confined to Europe alone, and a writer who succeeds in London is speedily read on the banks of the Delaware and the Ganges.

In the preface of the fourth volume, while I gloried in the name of an Englishman, I announced my approaching return to the neighbourhood of the Lake of Lausanne. This last trial confirmed my assurance that I had wisely chosen for my own happiness; nor did I once in a year's visit entertain a wish of settling in my native country. Britain is the free and fortunate island; but where is the spot in which I could unite the comforts and beauties of my establishment at Lausanne? The tumult of London astonished my eyes and ears; the amusements of public places were no longer adequate to the trouble; the clubs and assemblies were filled with new faces and young men; and our best society, our long and late dinners, would soon have been prejudicial to my health. Without any share in the political wheel, I must be idle and insignificant: yet the most splendid temptations would not have enticed me to engage a second time in the servitude of parliament or office. At Tunbridge, some weeks after the publication of my History, I reluctantly quitted Lord and Lady Sheffield, and with a young Swiss friend,[6] whom I had introduced to the English world, I pursued the road of Dover and Lausanne. My habitation was embellished in my absence; and the last division of books, which followed my steps, increased my chosen library to the number of between six and seven thousand volumes.

[5] Of their fourteen octavo volumes the two last include the whole body of the notes. The public importunity had forced *me* to remove them from the end of the volume to the bottom of the page; but I have often repented of my compliance.

[6] M. Wilhelm de Severy.

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[4] The French translation has now been corrected and re-edited by the masterly hand of M. Guizot.—M.

My seraglio was ample, my choice was free, my appetite was keen. After a full repast on Homer and Aristophanes, I involved myself in the philosophic maze in the writings of Plato, of which the dramatic is, perhaps, more interesting than the argumentative part; but I stepped aside into every path of inquiry which reading or reflection accidentally opened.

Alas! the joy of my return, and my studious ardour, were soon damped by the melancholy state of my friend Mr. Deyverdun. His health and spirits had long suffered a gradual decline, a succession of apoplectic fits announced his dissolution, and, before he expired, those who loved him could not wish for the continuance of his life. The voice of reason might congratulate his deliverance, but the feelings of nature and friendship could be subdued only by time: his amiable character was still alive in my remembrance; each room, each walk was imprinted with our common footsteps; and I should blush at my own philosophy, if a long interval of study had not preceded and followed the death of my friend. By his last will he left to me the option of purchasing his house and garden, or of possessing them during my life, on the payment either of a stipulated price, or of an easy retribution, to his kinsman and heir. I should probably have been tempted by the dæmon of property, if some legal difficulties had not been started against my title; a contest would have been vexatious, doubtful, and invidious; and the heir most gratefully subscribed an agreement, which rendered my life possession more perfect, and his future condition more advantageous. Yet I had often revolved the judicious lines in which Pope answers the objections of his long-sighted friend,—

> Pity to build without or child or wife;
> Why, you'll enjoy it only all your life:
> Well, if the use be mine, does it concern one
> Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon?

The certainty of my tenure has allowed me to lay out a considerable sum in improvements and alterations: they have been executed with skill and taste; and few men of letters, perhaps, in Europe, are so desirably lodged as myself. But I feel, and with the decline of years I shall more painfully feel, that I am alone in paradise. Among the circle of my acquaintance at Lausanne, I have gradually acquired the solid and tender friendship of a respectable family;[7] the four persons of whom it is composed are all endowed with the virtues best adapted to their age and situation; and I am encouraged to love the parents as a brother, and the children as a father. Every day we seek and

[7] The family of de Severy.

find the opportunities of meeting: yet even this valuable connection cannot supply the loss of domestic society.

Within the last two or three years our tranquillity has been clouded by the disorders of France; many families at Lausanne were alarmed and affected by the terrors of an impending bankruptcy; but the revolution, or rather the dissolution, of the kingdom, has been heard and felt in the adjacent lands.

I beg leave to subscribe my assent to Mr. Burke's creed on the revolution of France. I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can almost excuse his reverence for church establishments. I have sometimes thought of writing a dialogue of the dead, in which Lucian, Erasmus, and Voltaire should mutually acknowledge the danger of exposing an old superstition to the contempt of the blind and fanatic multitude.

A swarm of emigrants of both sexes, who escaped from the public ruin, has been attracted by the vicinity, the manners, and the language of Lausanne; and our narrow habitations, in town and country, are now occupied by the first names and titles of the departed monarchy. These noble fugitives are entitled to our pity; they may claim our esteem, but they cannot, in their present state of mind and fortune, much contribute to our amusement. Instead of looking down as calm and idle spectators on the theatre of Europe, our domestic harmony is somewhat embittered by the infusion of party spirit; our ladies and gentlemen assume the character of self-taught politicians; and the sober dictates of wisdom and experience are silenced by the clamour of the triumphant *democrates*. The fanatic missionaries of sedition have scattered the seeds of discontent in our cities and villages, which have flourished above two hundred and fifty years without fearing the approach of war or feeling the weight of government. Many individuals, and some communities, appear to be infected with the Gallic frenzy, the wild theories of equal and boundless freedom; but I trust that the body of the people will be faithful to their sovereign and to themselves; and I am satisfied that the failure or success of a revolt would equally terminate in the ruin of the country. While the aristocracy of Berne protects the happiness, it is superfluous to inquire whether it be founded in the rights of man: the economy of the state is liberally supplied without the aid of taxes; and the magistrates *must* reign with prudence and equity, since they are unarmed in the midst of an armed nation.

The revenue of Berne, excepting some small duties, is derived from church lands, tithes, feudal rights, and interest of money. The republic has nearly 500,000*l.* sterling in the English funds, and the

amount of their treasure is unknown to the citizens themselves. For myself (may the omen be averted!) I can only declare that the first stroke of a rebel drum would be the signal of my immediate departure.

When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery; in the civilised world the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty; and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honourable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. The general probability is about three to one that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year.[8] I have now passed that age, and may fairly estimate the present value of my existence in the three-fold division of mind, body, and estate.

1. The first and indispensable requisite of happiness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action.

—— Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ.

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity: some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigour from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure; and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties. The original soil has been highly improved by cultivation; but it may be questioned whether some flowers of fancy, some grateful errors, have not been eradicated with the weeds of prejudice. 2. Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. "The madness of superfluous health" I have never known, but my tender constitution has been fortified by time, and the inestimable gift of the sound and peaceful slumbers of infancy may be imputed both to the mind and body. 3. I have already described the merits of my society and situation; but these enjoyments would be tasteless or bitter if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. According to the scale of Switzerland I am a rich man; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse: shall I add

[8] See Buffon, Supplément à l'Histoire Naturelle, tom. vii. p. 158-164: of a given number of new-born infants, one half, by the fault of nature or man, is extinguished before the age of puberty and reason.—A melancholy calculation!

that, since the failure of my first wishes, I have never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection?

I am disgusted with the affectation of men of letters, who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow, and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution.[9] My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson: twenty happy years have been animated by the labour of my history, and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character, in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled. The freedom of my writings has indeed provoked an implacable tribe; but, as I was safe from the stings, I was soon accustomed to the buzzing of the hornets: my nerves are not tremblingly alive, and my literary temper is so happily framed, that I am less sensible of pain than of pleasure. The rational pride of an author may be offended, rather than flattered, by vague indiscriminate praise; but he cannot, he should not, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Even his moral sympathy may be gratified by the idea that now, in the present hour, he is imparting some degree of amusement or knowledge to his friends in a distant land; that one day his mind will be familiar to the grandchildren of those who are yet unborn.[1] I cannot boast of the friendship or favour of princes; the patronage of English literature has long since been devolved on our booksellers, and the measure of their liberality is the least ambiguous test of our common success. Perhaps the golden mediocrity of my fortune has contributed to fortify my application.

The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may *possibly* be my last: but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years.[2] I shall soon enter into

[9] Mr. d'Alembert relates that, as he was walking in the gardens of Sans Souci with the King of Prussia, Frederic said to him, "Do you see that old woman, a poor weeder, asleep on that sunny bank? she is probably a more happy being than either of us." The king and the philosopher may speak for themselves; for my part, I do not envy the old woman.

[1] In the first of ancient or modern romances (Tom Jones) this proud sentiment, this feast of fancy, is enjoyed by the genius of Fielding.—"Come, bright love of fame, &c., fill my ravished fancy with the hopes of charming ages yet to come. Foretel me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee but to enjoy, nay even to feed on, future praise. Comfort me by the solemn assurance that, when the little parlour in which I sit at this moment shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see."—Book xiii., chap. 1.

[2] Mr. Buffon, from our disregard of the possibility of death within the four-and-twenty hours, concludes that a chance which falls below or rises above ten thousand

the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season, in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis.[3] In private conversation, that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time, and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.[4]

to one will never affect the hopes or fears of a reasonable man. The fact is true, but our courage is the effect of thoughtlessness, rather than of reflection. If a public lottery were drawn for, the choice of an immediate victim, and if our name were inscribed on one of the ten thousand tickets, should we be perfectly easy?

[3] See Buffon.

[4] The proportion of a part to the whole is the only standard by which we can measure the length of our existence. At the age of twenty, one year is a tenth, perhaps, of the time which has elapsed within our consciousness and memory: at the age of fifty it is no more than the fortieth, and this relative value continues to decrease till the last sands are shaken by the hand of death. This reasoning may seem metaphysical; but on a trial it will be found satisfactory and just. The warm desires, the long expectations of youth are founded on the ignorance of themselves and of the world: they are gradually damped by time and experience, by disappointment and possession; and after the middle season the crowd must be content to remain at the foot of the mountain; while the few who have climbed the summit aspire to descend or expect to fall. In old age the consolation of hope is reserved for the tenderness of parents, who commence a new life in their children; the faith of enthusiasts, who sing hallelujahs above the clouds; and the vanity of authors, who presume the immortality of their name and writings.[a]

[a] It is melancholy to think that Gibbon found no place for the confidence with which the rational Christian looks forward to the enjoyment of another and a higher state of existence; that state of which his confessed inability to comprehend the real nature, confirms, rather than weakens, his humble reliance on its certainty.—M.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF GIBBON.

[Gibbon's autobiography does not extend beyond the year 1789. He continued to reside at Lausanne till 1793, when he returned to England to alleviate by his presence and sympathy a domestic affliction of his friend Lord Sheffield. He arrived in England in the beginning of June, and died at London on the 16th of January in the following year. Lord Sheffield has given an account of the last illness and death of his friend, from which the following extracts are taken.]

"Mr. Gibbon arrived in the beginning of June at my house in Downing-street in good health; and after passing about a month with me there, we settled at Sheffield-place for the remainder of summer, where his wit, learning, and cheerful politeness, delighted a great variety of characters. Although he was inclined to represent his health as better than it really was, his habitual dislike to motion appeared to increase; his inaptness to exercise confined him to the library and dining-room, and there he joined my friend Mr. Frederick North in pleasant arguments against exercise in general. He ridiculed the unsettled and restless disposition that summer, the most uncomfortable, as he said, of all seasons, generally gives to those who have the free use of their limbs. Such arguments were little required to keep society, Mr. Jekyll, Mr. Douglas, &c., within doors, when his company was only there to be enjoyed; for neither the fineness of the season nor the most promising parties of pleasure could tempt the company of either sex to desert him.

"Those who have enjoyed the society of Mr. Gibbon will agree with me that his conversation was still more captivating than his writings. Perhaps no man ever divided time more fairly between literary labour and social enjoyment; and hence, probably, he derived his peculiar excellence of making his very extensive knowledge contribute, in the highest degree, to the use or pleasure of those with whom he conversed. He united, in the happiest manner imaginable, two characters which are not often found in the same person, the profound scholar and the peculiarly agreeable companion.

"It would be superfluous to attempt a very minute delineation of a character which is so distinctly marked in the Memoirs and Letters. He has described himself without reserve, and with perfect sincerity. The Letters, and especially the Extracts from the Journal, which

could not have been written with any purpose of being seen, will make the reader perfectly acquainted with the man.[5]

"Excepting a visit to Lord Egremont and Mr. Hayley, whom he particularly esteemed, Mr. Gibbon was not absent from Sheffield-place till the beginning of October, when we were reluctantly obliged to part with him, that he might perform his engagement to Mrs. Gibbon at Bath, the widow of his father, who had early deserved, and invariably retained, his affection. From Bath he proceeded to Lord Spencer's at Althorp, a family which he always met with uncommon satisfaction. He continued in good health during the whole summer, and in excellent spirits (I never knew him enjoy better); and when he went from Sheffield-place, little did I imagine it would be the last time that I should have the inexpressible pleasure of seeing him there in full possession of health.

"FROM GIBBON to LORD SHEFFIELD.

"'St. James's-street, Nov. 11th, 1793.

"'I must at length withdraw the veil before my state of health, though the naked truth may alarm you more than a fit of the gout. Have you never observed, through my *inexpressibles*, a large prominency which, as it was not at all painful, and very little troublesome, I had strangely neglected for many years? But since my departure from Sheffield-place it has increased (most stupendously), is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Yesterday I sent for Farquhar, who is allowed to be a very skilful surgeon. After viewing and palping, he very seriously desired to call in assistance, and has examined it again to-day with Mr. Cline, a surgeon, as he says, of the first eminence. They both pronounce it a *hydrocele* (a collection of water), which must be let out by the operation of tapping; but, from its magnitude and long neglect, they think it a most extraordinary case, and wish to have another surgeon, Dr. Baillie, present. If the business should go off smoothly, I shall be delivered from my

[5] Elsewhere Lord Sheffield observes,—"His [Gibbon's] letters in general bear a strong resemblance to the style and turn of his conversation; the characteristics of which were vivacity, elegance, and precision, with knowledge astonishingly extensive and correct. He never ceased to be instructive and entertaining; and in general there was a vein of pleasantry in his conversation which prevented its becoming languid, even during a residence of many months with a family in the country.

"It has been supposed that he always arranged what he intended to say before he spoke; his quickness in conversation contradicts this notion: but it is very true that, before he sat down to write a note or letter, he completely arranged in his mind what he meant to express. He pursued the same method in respect to other composition; and he occasionally would walk several times about his apartment before he had rounded a period to his taste. He has pleasantly remarked to me that it sometimes cost him many a turn before he could throw a sentiment into a form that gratified his own criticism. His systematic habit of arrangement in point of style, assisted, in his instance, by an excellent memory and correct judgment, is much to be recommended to those who aspire to perfection in writing."

burthen (it is almost as big as a small child), and walk about in four or five days with a truss. But the medical gentlemen, who never speak quite plain, insinuate to me the possibility of an inflammation, of fever, &c. I am not appalled at the thoughts of the operation, which is fixed for Wednesday next, twelve o'clock; but it has occurred to me that you might wish to be present, before and afterwards, till the crisis was past; and to give you that opportunity I shall solicit a delay till Thursday or even Friday. Adieu.'

"Immediately on receiving the last letter, I went the same day from Brighthelmstone to London, and was agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Gibbon had dined at Lord Lucan's, and did not return to his lodgings, where I waited for him, till eleven o'clock at night. Those who have seen him within the last eight or ten years must be surprised to hear that he could doubt whether his disorder was apparent. When he returned to England in 1787, I was greatly alarmed by a prodigious increase, which I always conceived to proceed from a rupture. I did not understand why he, who had talked with me on every other subject relative to himself and his affairs without reserve, should never in any shape hint at a malady so troublesome; but on speaking to his valet de chambre, he told me Mr. Gibbon could not bear the least allusion to that subject, and never would suffer him to notice it. I consulted some medical persons, who, with me supposing it to be a rupture, were of opinion that nothing could be done, and said that he surely must have had advice, and of course had taken all necessary precautions. He now talked freely with me about his disorder, which, he said, began in the year 1761; that he then consulted Mr. Hawkins the surgeon, who did not decide whether it was the beginning of a rupture, or an hydrocele; but he desired to see Mr. Gibbon again when he came to town. Mr. Gibbon, not feeling any pain, nor suffering any inconvenience, as he said, never returned to Mr. Hawkins; and although the disorder continued to increase gradually, and of late years very much indeed, he never mentioned it to any person, however incredible it may appear, from 1761 to November 1793. I told him that I had always supposed there was no doubt of its being a rupture; his answer was, that he never thought so, and that he and the surgeons who attended him were of opinion that it was an hydrocele. It is now certain that it was originally a rupture, and that an hydrocele had lately taken place in the same part; and it is remarkable that his legs, which had been swelled about the ankle, particularly one of them, since he had the erysipelas in 1790, recovered their former shape as soon as the water appeared in another part, which did not happen till between

the time he left Sheffield-place, in the beginning of October, and his arrival at Althorp, towards the latter end of that month. On the Thursday following the date of his last letter Mr. Gibbon was tapped for the first time; four quarts of a transparent watery fluid were discharged by that operation. Neither inflammation nor fever ensued; the tumour was diminished to nearly half its size; the remaining part was a soft irregular mass. I had been with him two days before, and I continued with him above a week after the first tapping, during which time he enjoyed his usual spirits; and the three medical gentlemen who attended him will recollect his pleasantry, even during the operation. He was abroad again in a few days, but, the water evidently collecting very fast, it was agreed that a second puncture should be made a fortnight after the first. Knowing that I should be wanted at a meeting in the country, he pressed me to attend it, and promised that soon after the second operation was performed he would follow me to Sheffield-place.

"GIBBON TO LORD SHEFFIELD AT BRIGHTON.

"'St. James's-street, Nov. 25th, 1793.

"'Though Farquhar has promised to write a line, I conceive you may not be sorry to hear directly from me. The operation of yesterday was much longer, more searching, and more painful than the former; but it has eased and lightened me to a much greater degree.[6] No inflammation, no fever, a delicious night, leave to go abroad to-morrow, and to go out of town when I please, *en attendant* the future measures of a radical cure.' * * *

"On the 10th of December Mr. Gibbon proceeded to Sheffield-place; and his discourse was never more brilliant nor more entertaining than on his arrival. The parallels which he drew, and the comparisons which he made, between the leading men of this country were sketched in his best manner, and were infinitely interesting. However, this last visit to Sheffield-place became far different from any he had ever made before. That ready, cheerful, various, and illuminating conversation, which we had before admired in him, was not now always to be found in the library or the dining-room. He moved with difficulty, and retired from company sooner than he had been used to do. On the 23rd of December his appetite began to fail him. He observed to me that it was a very bad sign *with him* when he could not eat his breakfast, which he had done at all times very heartily; and this seems to have been the strongest expression of apprehension that he was ever observed to utter. A considerable

[6] Three quarts of the same fluid as before were discharged.—SHEFFIELD.

degree of fever now made its appearance. Inflammation arose, from the weight and the bulk of the tumour. Water again collected very fast, and when the fever went off he never entirely recovered his appetite even for breakfast. I became very uneasy at his situation towards the end of the month, and thought it necessary to advise him to set out for London. He went to London on the 7th of January, and the next day I received the following billet, the last he ever wrote:—

"GIBBON TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

"'St. James's-street, four o'clock, Tuesday.

"'This date says everything. I was almost killed between Sheffield-place and East Grinsted, by hard, frozen, long, and cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach to an Indian wigwam. The rest was something less painful; and I reached this place half-dead, but not seriously feverish or ill. I found a dinner invitation from Lord Lucan; but what are dinners to me? I wish they did not know of my departure. I catch the flying post. What an effort! Adieu till Thursday or Friday.'

"By his own desire I did not follow him till Thursday the 9th. I then found him far from well. The tumour more distended than before, inflamed, and ulcerated in several places. Remedies were applied to abate the inflammation; but it was not thought proper to puncture the tumour, for the third time, till Monday the 13th of January, when no less than six quarts of fluid were discharged. He seemed much relieved by the evacuation. His spirits continued good. He talked, as usual, of passing his time at houses which he had often frequented with great pleasure — the Duke of Devonshire's, Mr. Craufurd's, Lord Spencer's, Lord Lucan's, Sir Ralph Payne's, and Mr. Batt's: and when I told him that I should not return to the country, as I had intended, he pressed me to go: knowing I had an engagement there on public business, he said, 'You may be back on Saturday, and I intend to go on Thursday to Devonshire House.' I had not any apprehension that his life was in danger, although I began to fear that he might not be restored to a comfortable state, and that motion would be very troublesome to him; but he talked of a radical cure. He said that it was fortunate the disorder had shown itself while he was in England, where he might procure the best assistance; and if a radical cure could not be obtained before his return to Lausanne, there was an able surgeon at Geneva, who could come to tap him when it should be necessary.

"On Tuesday the 14th, when the risk of inflammation and fever

from the last operation was supposed to be passed, as the medical gentlemen who attended him expressed no fears for his life, I went that afternoon part of the way to Sussex, and the following day reached Sheffield-place. The next morning, the 16th, I received by the post a good account of Mr. Gibbon, which mentioned also that he hourly gained strength. In the evening came a letter by express, dated noon that day, which acquainted me that Mr. Gibbon had had a violent attack the preceding night, and that it was not probable he could live till I came to him. I reached his lodgings in St. James's-street about midnight, and learned that my friend had expired a quarter before one o'clock that day, the 16th of January, 1794.

"After I left him on Tuesday afternoon, the 14th, he saw some company, Lady Lucan and Lady Spencer, and thought himself well enough at night to omit the opium draught which he had been used to take for some time. He slept very indifferently: before nine the next morning he rose, but could not eat his breakfast. However, he appeared tolerably well, yet complained at times of a pain in his stomach. At one o'clock he received a visit of an hour from Madame de Sylva; and at three his friend Mr. Craufurd, of Auchinames (for whom he had a particular regard), called and stayed with him till past five o'clock. They talked, as usual, on various subjects; and twenty hours before his death Mr. Gibbon happened to fall into a conversation, not uncommon with him, on the probable duration of his life. He said that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. About six he ate the wing of a chicken, and drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner he became very uneasy and impatient; complained a good deal, and appeared so weak that his servant was alarmed. Mr. Gibbon had sent to his friend and relation Mr. Robert Darell, whose house was not far distant, desiring to see him, and adding that he had something particular to say. But, unfortunately, this desired interview never took place.

"During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a disposition to vomit. Soon after nine he took his opium draught and went to bed. About ten he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven the servant asked whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar? he answered, no; that he was as well as he had been the day before. At about half-past eight he got out of bed, and said he was '*plus adroit*' than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again without assistance, better than usual. About nine he said that he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in

bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet de chambre* returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, '*Pourquoi est-ce que vous me quittez?*' This was about half-past eleven. At twelve he drank some brandy and water from a teapot, and desired his favourite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign to show that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir; his eyes half-shut. About a quarter before one he ceased to breathe.

"The *valet de chambre* observed that Mr. Gibbon did not at any time show the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death; and it does not appear that he ever thought himself in danger, unless his desire to speak to Mr. Darell may be considered in that light.

"Perhaps I dwell too long on these minute and melancholy circumstances. Yet the close of such a life can hardly fail to interest every reader; and I know that the public has received a different and erroneous account of my friend's last hours.

"I can never cease to feel regret that I was not by his side at this awful period; a regret so strong that I can express it only by borrowing (as Mason has done on a similar occasion) the forcible language of Tacitus: *Mihi præter acerbitatem* amici *erepti, auget mœstitiam quod assidere valetudini, fovere deficientem, satiari vultu, complexu non contigit.* It is some consolation to me that I did not, like Tacitus, by a long absence, anticipate the loss of my friend several years before his decease. Although I had not the mournful gratification of being near him on the day he expired, yet, during his illness, I had not failed to attend him with that assiduity which his genius, his virtues, and, above all, our long, uninterrupted, and happy friendship, sanctioned and demanded."

THE

HISTORY

OF

THE DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—THE EXTENT AND MILITARY FORCE OF THE EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

In the second century of the Christian Æra, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence: the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this, and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall: a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and

Moderation of Augustus.

the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigour of his counsels, it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.[1]

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Æthiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders, and protected the unwarlike natives of those sequestered regions.[2] The northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the

[1] Dion Cassius (l. liv. [c. 8] p. 736), with the annotations of Reimar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserts that *he compelled* the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus.

[2] Strabo (l. xvi. p. 780), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. l. vi. [c. 28, 29] 32, 35), and Dion Cassius (l. liii. [c. 29] p. 723, and l. liv. [c. 6] p. 734), have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (see Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52). They were arrived within three days' journey of the Spice country, the rich object of their invasion.[a]

[a] There are some inaccuracies in this statement. According to Strabo, the Romans under Ælius Gallus advanced as far as Marsyaba or Marsyabæ, within two (not three) days' journey of the spice country; to this place they laid siege, but, being unable to take it in consequence of the want of water, they commenced their retreat. Gibbon not only assumes that this place is the same as Mariaba, which Pliny mentions among the conquests of Ælius Gallus, but also, following d'Anville, identifies Mariaba with Mâreb, the celebrated capital of the Sabeans of Yemen, upon the borders of the remote southern province. But in the first place, Strabo mentions Mariaba, the capital of the Sabeans, as distinct from Marsyaba. (See Strabo, pp. 768, 778.) Secondly, Mariaba or Mâreb is a common name of the chief towns of Arabia, as it signifies "metropolis," and consequently the mere identity of name, on which alone d'Anville appears to have relied, is of no value in this case, unless supported by other evidence. Thirdly, Gosselin, Dean Vincent, and Mr. Foster, have adduced strong reasons for believing that Ælius Gallus did not penetrate as far south as Mâreb, upon the borders of Hadramaut, and consequently the latter town cannot be the same as the Mariaba of Pliny. Pliny's Mariaba and Strabo's Marsyaba may perhaps be the same place, notwithstanding the discrepancy in the statement of these authors; though Mr. Foster supposes them to be two different places. Mariaba he identifies with Mâreb,

expense and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of fortune.[3] On the death of that emperor, his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries: on the west the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.[4]

Imitated by his successors.

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Cæsars seldom shewed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer that those triumphs which *their* indolence neglected should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians.[5]

Conquest of Britain was the first exception to it.

The only accession which the Roman empire received during the first century of the Christian Æra was the province of Britain. In this single instance the successors of Cæsar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms; the pleasing, though doubtful, intelligence of a pearl fishery attracted

[3] By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus [c. 55 *sqq.*]. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 117, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.

[4] Tacit. Annal. [l. i. 11]. Dion Cassius, l. lvi. [c. 33] p. 832; and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Cæsars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim.

[5] Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola, were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expressed by Tacitus, was, in the strictest sense of the word, *imperatoria virtus*.

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the chief town of the Beni Khâled, in the province of Bahrein, and at the eastern foot of the great Nedjd chain; Mârsyaba he regards as the same as Sabbia, the chief town in the province of Sabiê, on the northern confines of Yemen. When Strabo says that Ælius Gallus arrived within two days' journey of the spice country, he probably meant the emporium of the spice-trade. See Foster's Arabia, vol. ii. p. 277 seq.—S.

their avarice;[6] and as Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid,[7] maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island submitted to the Roman yoke.[8] The various tribes of Britons possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness; they laid them down, or turned them against each other, with wild inconstancy; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids, could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered as already achieved; and it was the design of Agricola to complete and ensure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient.[9] The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom was on every side removed from before their eyes.

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever disappointed this rational, though extensive, scheme of conquest. Before his departure the prudent general had provided for security as well as for dominion. He had observed that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of

[6] Cæsar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus observes, with reason (in Agricola, c. 12), that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deesse quam nobis avaritiam."

[7] Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mela, l. iii. c. 6 (he wrote under Claudius), that, by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London.

[8] See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the Life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely, illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley.

[9] The Irish writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.

Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterwards fortified, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart, erected on foundations of stone.[10] This wall of Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved, in the northern extremity of the island, their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised, but their country was never subdued.[11] The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians.[12]

[10] See Horsley's Britannia Romana, l. i. c. 10.[a]

[11] The poet Buchanan celebrates with elegance and spirit (see his Sylvæ, v.) the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the single testimony of Richard of Cirencester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

[12] See Appian (in Procem. [c. 5]) and the uniform imagery of Ossian's poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.

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[a] The remains of two Roman walls exist in Britain, one extending from the Clyde to the Frith of Forth, and the other from the Solway to the mouth of the Tyne. The former is an entrenchment of earth, and is known by the name of Grimes Dyke. The latter, which is a far more important work, consists of two parallel lines of fortifications — a stone wall and an earthen rampart — which run parallel to, and generally within sixty or seventy yards of each other; the stone wall being on the northern, and the earthen rampart on the southern side of the island. The wall between the Solway and the mouth of the Tyne was at a later period, at all events, the boundary of Roman Britain. Respecting the builders of these walls there is a difference of opinion. It is stated by Tacitus that Agricola erected a line of forts between the Friths of Clyde and Forth in A.D. 81 (Agricol. c. 23); and we learn from Capitolinus that in the reign of Antoninus Pius a rampart of turf was raised by Lollius Urbicus in A.D. 140. (Antonin., Pausan. viii. 43, § 4.) There can be no doubt that this is the wall between the Friths of Solway and Forth, usually described as the wall of Antoninus, since an extant inscription attests that it was raised in his reign. With respect to the southern wall there is more difficulty. Spartianus states that "Hadrian first built a wall eighty miles in length, dividing the Romans from the barbarians" (Hadrian, c. 11); and the same writer in another passage also relates that Septimius Severus built a wall across the island. (Septim. Sever. c. 18.) Hence the stone wall from the Solway to the Tyne has been ascribed to Septimius Severus, and the parallel earthen rampart to Hadrian. But Mr. Bruce, the most recent writer on the Roman wall, adduces strong reasons for believing that the stone wall and the earthen rampart are parts of one fortification and are essential to each other. He supposes that they were both raised by Hadrian, whose name frequently occurs in inscriptions found in the locality, and that no wall was built by Severus, though this emperor may have repaired the work of Hadrian. In confirmation of this view it may be stated that neither Dion Cassius nor Herodian attributes the erection of any wall to Severus. See Bruce, The Roman Wall, an account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, extending from the Tyne to the Solway, London, 1851. The passages from the ancient authors relating to the Roman walls are collected by Böcking in his Commentary to the 'Notitia Dignitatum,' Pars Post. p. 887.—S.

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of Imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general.[13] The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted, with impunity, the majesty of Rome.[14] To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul.[15] Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valour and policy.[16] This memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by an absolute submission of the barbarians.[17] The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Dniester, the Theiss or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian empires.[18]

Conquest of Dacia; the second exception. A.D. 101-106.

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the East; but he lamented with a sigh that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the son of Philip.[19] Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid

Conquests of Trajan in the East, A.D. 115-117.

[13] See Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts.
[14] Dion Cassius, l. lxvii. [6 *sq.*].
[15] Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Cæsars, with Spanheim's observations.
[16] Plin. Epist. viii. 9. [4.]
[17] Dion Cassius, l. lxviii. [c. 6] p. 1123. [c. 14] 1131. Julian in Cæsaribus. Eutropius, viii. 2, 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.
[18] See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the province of Dacia, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 444–468.
[19] Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the Cæsars of Julian.

and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf. He enjoyed the honour of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India.[20] Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchis, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoëne, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces.[21] But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect; and it was justly to be dreaded that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

Resigned by his successor Hadrian, A.D. 117.

It was an ancient tradition that, when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented according to the fashion of that age by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favourable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede.[22] During many ages the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to its own accomplishment. But though Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted

[20] Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55.

[21] Dion Cassius, l. lxviii. [c. 18, *sqq.*]; and the Abbreviators.[a]

[22] Ovid. Fast. l. ii. ver. 667. See Livy [i. 55], and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, under the reign of Tarquin.

[a] A permanent addition was made to the Roman empire in the reign of Trajan, which Gibbon has omitted to notice. In A.D. 105 the part of Arabia extending east of Damascus down to the Red Sea was conquered by A. Cornelius Palma, and formed into a Roman province under the name of Arabia. (Dion Cass. lxviii. 14; Ammian. Marc. xiv. 8.) It continued to be a Roman province after the death of Trajan, and was enlarged by Septimius Severus, A.D. 195. (Dion Cass. lxxv. 1, 2; Eutrop. viii. 18.) Its principal towns were Petra and Bostra, the former in the south and the latter in the north of the province. If we follow the authority of Niebuhr, another permanent addition was made to the empire in the reign of Trajan, by the conquest of Nubia, which he supposes to have remained subject to Rome till the middle of the third century. But the evidence on this point is not conclusive. See Niebuhr's Lectures on the History of Rome, vol. iii. p. 227; and Kleine Schriften, vol. ii. p. 186.—S.

to the authority of the emperor Hadrian.[23] The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign; withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria; and, in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire.[24] Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some colour to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

Contrast of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

The martial and ambitious spirit of Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The restless activity of Hadrian was not less remarkable when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bareheaded, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honoured with the presence of the monarch.[25] But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy, and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journeys of that amiable prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa.[26]

[23] St. Augustin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the Augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv. 29.[a]

[24] See the Augustan History, p. 5. [Spartian. Hadr. c. 9.] Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomisers. It is somewhat surprising that this memorable event should be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin.

[25] Dion, l. lxix. [c. 9] p. 1157. Hist. August. p. 5, 8. [Spartian. Hadr. 10, 16.] If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions, and other monuments, would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian.[b]

[26] See the Augustan History and the Epitomes.

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[a] The turn of Gibbon's sentence is Augustin's:—"Plus Hadrianum regem hominum, quam regem Deorum timuisse videatur."—M.

[b] The journeys of Hadrian are traced in a note on Solvet's translation of Hegewisch, Essai sur l'Epoque de l'Histoire Romaine la plus heureuse pour le Genre Humain, Paris, 1834, p. 123. — M. See also Gregorovius, Geschichte des Römischen Kaisers Hadrian, Königsberg, 1851.—S.

Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of forty-three years their virtuous labours were crowned with success; and, if we except a few slight hostilities that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace.[27] The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a contemporary historian that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honour which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subjects.[28]

Pacific system of Hadrian and the two Antonines.

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines that they were as little disposed to endure as to offer an injury. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube.[29] The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

Defensive wars of Marcus Antoninus.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a pro-

[27] We must however remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province. Pausanias (l. viii. c. 43) mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius; —1st. Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of Atlas. 2nd. Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the Augustan History, p. 19. [Capitol. Ant. P. c. 5.]

[28] Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman Wars. [c. 7.]

[29] Dion, l. lxxi. [c. 2, *seq.*] Hist. August. in Marco. [Capitolinus, c. 9, 17, &c.] The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion, and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian.

perty to defend, and some share in enacting those laws which it was their interest as well as duty to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.[30] The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered either as a legal qualification or as a proper recompence for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature.[31] In all levies a just preference was given to the climates of the North over those of the South: the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reasonably presumed, that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen, would supply more vigour and resolution than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury.[32] After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

Military establishment of the Roman emperors.

That public virtue which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature—honour and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice

Discipline

[30] The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above forty pounds sterling (Dionys. Halicarn. iv. 17), a very high qualification at a time when money was so scarce that an ounce of silver was equivalent to seventy pound weight of brass.[a] The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, were indiscriminately admitted by Marius. See Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 86.

[31] Cæsar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers: but it was during the licence of civil war,[b] and after the victory he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

[32] See Vegetius, de Re Militari, l. i. c. 2-7.

[a] On the uncertainty of all these estimates, and the difficulty of fixing the relative value of brass and silver, compare Niebuhr, vol. i. p. 473, &c. Eng. trans. p. 452. According to Niebuhr, the relative disproportion in value between the two metals arose in a great degree from the abundance of brass or copper.—M. Compare also Dureau de la Malle, Economie Politique des Romains, especially l. i. c. ix.—M. 1845.

[b] This legion was raised among the inhabitants of Transalpine Gaul, about B.C. 55, and not during the civil war, as Gibbon states. See Sueton. Jul. c. 24.—S.

that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated. On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire.[33] The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominious to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger.[34] These motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompence, after the appointed time of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life,[35] whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise.[36] Military exercises were the important and unremitted

Exercises.

[33] The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the first of January.

[34] Tacitus calls the Roman eagles Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops.[a]

[35] See Gronovius de Pecunia vetere, l. iii. p. 120, &c. The emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After twenty years' service, the veteran received three thousand denarii (about one hundred pounds sterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double those of the legions.

[36] *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Linguâ Latinâ, l. iv. [l. v. § 87, Müller's ed.] Cicero in Tusculan. l. ii. 37 [16]. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connexion between the languages and manners of nations.

[a] See also Dion Cass. xl. c. 18.—M.

object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained, both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed that the arms destined to this imitation of war should be of double the weight which was required in real action.[37] It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic or martial dance.[38] In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarised themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise.[39] It was the policy of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the unexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity.[40] Under the reigns of those princes the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius,[41] in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Cæsar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the Imperial legion may be described in a few

The legions under the emperors.

[37] Vegetius, l. i. c. 11, and the rest of his first book.

[38] The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxv. p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

[39] Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii. c. 5 [§ 1]. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline.

[40] Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Augustan History. [Spartian. Hadr. 14.]

[41] See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline, in the sixth book of its history [cc. 19-42].

words.[42] The heavy-armed infantry, which composed its principal strength,[43] was divided into ten cohorts and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to six thousand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service: an open helmet, with a lofty crest; a breastplate; or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of eighteen inches.[44] This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet, when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his sword, and rushed forwards to close with the enemy. His sword was a short well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary.[45] The legion was usually drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks.[46] A body of troops, habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition

Arms.

[42] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 5, &c. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire.

[43] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. iii. c. 1. In the purer age of Cæsar and Cicero the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry. Under the Lower Empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost as exclusively to the men at arms who fought on horseback.

[44] In the time of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (l. v. c. 46) the steel point of the *pilum* seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.

[45] For the legionary arms, see Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, l. iii. c. 2-7.

[46] See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, Georgic ii. v. 279.

which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader, might suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants.[47] The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes wedged together in the closest array.[48] But it was soon discovered, by reflection as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion.[49]

Cavalry.

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of an hundred and thirty-two men; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a regiment, if we may use the modern expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army.[50] The cavalry of the emperors was no longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valour, the future suffrages of their countrymen.[51] Since the alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice and of the revenue;[52] and whenever they embraced the profession of arms they were immediately intrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot.[53] Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry

[47] M. Guichard, Mémoires Militaires, tom. i. c. 4, and Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. i. p. 293-311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer.

[48] See Arrian's Tactics [c. 12]. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

[49] Polyb. l. xvii. [xviii. 15.]

[50] Veget. de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who refuse the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.[a]

[51] See Livy almost throughout, particularly xlii. 61.

[52] Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 2 [8]. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. ii. c. 2.

[53] As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline; which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune.[b]

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[a] See also Joseph. B. J. iii. vi. 2.—M.

[b] Gibbon has not described with sufficient accuracy the position of the Equites under the empire. This will be best understood by a brief account of their history. The original cavalry of the Roman army consisted of the eighteen equestrian centuries instituted by Servius Tullius. These received each a horse from the state, and are therefore

from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armour with which the cavalry of the East was encumbered. *Their* more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin and a long broad-sword were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances and of iron maces they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians.[54]

Auxiliaries.

The safety and honour of the empire was principally intrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service.[55] Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state.[56] All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and, howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their

[54] See Arrian's Tactics [c. 4].

[55] Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

[56] Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. [c. 16.]

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frequently called *Equites equo publico* (Cic. Philipp. vi. 5). In course of time, as the number of wealthy persons increased at Rome, those who possessed an equestrian fortune were allowed to serve in the Roman cavalry with their own horses, though they were not included in the eighteen equestrian centuries. As they served on horseback, they were called equites; but they had no legal right to this title, which was confined to the *Equites equo publico*. This second class of equites is first mentioned in B.C. 403, during the siege of Veii (Liv. v. 7). In B.C. 123 another change was introduced. Down to this time the equites had been only a division in the army; the political community had consisted only of patricians and plebeians, some of the equites belonging to the former and some to the latter. But in B.C. 123 the Ordo Equestris, as a distinct class in the state, was formed by the Lex Sempronia of C. Gracchus, by which the judices were to be chosen from those citizens who possessed an equestrian fortune. The Equites equo publico, who formed the eighteen equestrian centuries, still continued to exist as a separate body; but towards the end of the republic they no longer served as horse-soldiers. Their place was supplied by the cavalry of the allies; and when they were engaged in military service, it was as officers attached to the staff, or commanding the cavalry of the allies, and sometimes even the legions. Augustus reorganized the Equites equo publico, and made them an honourable corps, from which all the higher officers in the army and the chief magistrates in the state were chosen. Hence admission into this body was equivalent to an introduction into public life. They were divided into six turmæ, each commanded by an officer under the title of *Sevir*; and at their head was the heir presumptive to the throne, upon whom the equites conferred the title of *Princeps Juventutis*. See Zumpt, Ueber die Römischen Ritter und den Ritterstand in Rom, Berlin, 1840; and Marquardt, Historiæ Equitum Romanorum, libri iv., Berlin, 1840.—S.

numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves.[57] Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of præfects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline.[58] Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.[59]

Artillery.

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city.[60] As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp the prætorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the

Encampment.

[57] Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the Italian allies of the republic.

[58] Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani.

[59] The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. ii. p. 233-290). He prefers them in many respects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent in proportion as personal valour and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.

[60] Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words:—"Universa quæ in quoque belli genere necessaria esse "creduntur, secum legio debet ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, arma- "tam aciat civitatem."

pick-axe was no less familiar than that of the sword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.[61]

March.

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legionaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen-furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.[62] Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles.[63] On the appearance of an enemy they threw aside their baggage, and, by easy and rapid evolutions, converted the column of march into an order of battle.[64] The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Number and disposition of the legions.

Such were the arts of war by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions: two in the Lower and three in the Upper

[61] For the Roman Castremetation, see Polybius, l. vi. [c. 27 *sqq*], with Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ; Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5 [§ 2, *sqq.*]; Vegetius, i. 21-25, iii. 8; and Mémoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.

[62] Cicero in Tusculan. ii. 37 [16]. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5 [§ 5]. Frontinus, iv. 1 [§ 1].

[63] Vegetius, i. 9. See Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.

[64] See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. i. p. 141-234.

Germany; one in Rhætia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæsia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was intrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Prætorian Guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Prætorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but in their arms and institutions we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.[65]

Navy.

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity;[66] the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum, in the bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients that, as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.[67] Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to com-

[65] Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. lv. p. 794 [c. 23]) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4, 5.

[66] The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

[67] Plutarch, in Marc. Anton. [c. 66.] And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19.

mand, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ships and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.[68] If we review this general state of the Imperial forces, of the cavalry as well as infantry, of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy, the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men: a military power which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire.[69]

Amount of the whole establishment.

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states.

View of the provinces of the Roman empire.

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenæan mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the former, on the side of the East, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain—Gallicia and the Asturias, Biscay and Navarre, Leon and the two Castilles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon—all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.[70] Of the

Spain.

[68] See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

[69] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

[70] See Strabo, l. ii. [l. iii. p. 166, 167.] It is natural enough to suppose that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis, and several moderns who have written in

barians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

Gaul.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburg, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father he introduced a division of Gaul, equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent states.[71] The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæsar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valour, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine from Basil to Leyden received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany.[72] Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

Britain.

We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland as far as the Friths of Dumbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom the country was irregularly

Latin use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Géographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.

[71] One hundred and fifteen *cities* appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

[72] D'Anville, Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule.

divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgæ in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk.[73] As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the Columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

Before the Roman conquest the country which is now called Lombardy was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.[74] The middle part of the peninsula, that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilized life.[75] The Tiber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and *their* posterity have erected convents.[76] Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.[77]

Italy.

[73] Whitaker's History of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.

[74] The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin.[a] See M. Freret, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

[75] See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, l. i.[b]

[76] The first contrast was observed by the ancients. See Florus, i. 11. The second must strike every modern traveller.

[77] Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. iii. [c. 6]) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.

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[a] Or Liburnian, according to Niebuhr. Vol. i. p. 172.—M.

[b] Add Niebuhr, vol. i., and Otfried Müller, *die Etrusker*, which contains all that is known, and much that is conjectured, about this remarkable people. Also Micali, Storia degli antichi popoli Italiani, Florence, 1832.—M.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters.[78] The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier,[79] and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mæsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The Danube and Illyrian frontier.

The province of Rhætia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube, from its source as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains; and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

Rhætia.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that, if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Theiss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the house of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman empire.

Noricum and Pannonia.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long but narrow tract between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa.[a] The inland parts have assumed

Dalmatia.

[78] Tournefort, Voyages en Grèce et Asie Mineure, lettre xviii.

[79] The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine sea. See Severini, Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.

[a] The sea-coast of Dalmatia, together with Ragusa, now forms part of the Austrian dominions.—S.

the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power.[80]

After the Danube had received the waters of the Theiss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister.[81] It formerly divided Mæsia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mæsia, which during the middle ages was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery. Mæsia and Dacia.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and, with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achæan league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia. Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

[80] A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.*

[81] The Save rises near the confines of *Istria*, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube.

* A translation of the Travels of the Abbate Fortis was published in London in 1788. But the best account of those countries is by Sir Gardner Wilkinson in his 'Dalmatia and Montenegro,' London, 1848.—S.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed, with some propriety, to the peninsula which, confined between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district westward of mount Taurus and the river Halys was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.[82]

Asia Minor.

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Asia till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire: nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and, towards the south, the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent.[a]

Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine.

[82] See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine when he was governor of Cappadocia.

[a] This comparison is exaggerated, with the intention, no doubt, of attacking the authority of the Bible, which boasts of the fertility of Palestine. But not only do many ancient writers extol the fertility of Palestine (Tac. Hist. v. 6; Amm. Marc. xiv. 8; Joseph. Hist. vi. 1, § 1), but even in the present day, the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil.—Abridged from G. & M.

Yet Phœnicia and Palestine will for ever live in the memory of mankind; since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.[83] A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confines of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to form any settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.[84]

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.[85] By its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman præfect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pasha. The Nile flows down the country above five hundred miles, from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks on either side the extent of fertility by the measure of its inundations. Cyrene, situate towards the west and along the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca. Egypt.

From Cyrene to the ocean the coast of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely, is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore or an hundred miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage it became the centre of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is Africa.

[83] The progress of religion is well known. The use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Christian æra. But in a period of three thousand years the Phœnician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

[84] Dion Cassius, lib. lxviii. [p. 1141] p. 1131.

[85] Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

[86] The time at which the use of letters was introduced into Greece by the Phœnicians is unknown, but certainly at a much later period than is asserted by Gibbon. The earliest Greek inscriptions extant are not much more ancient than the 50th Olympiad, or B.C. 580.—S.

now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Augustus the limits of Numidia were contracted; and at least two-thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæsariensis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Salle, on the ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets;[86] but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent.[87] a

[86] The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of Mount Atlas (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea, and, as it was frequently visited by the Phœnicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. i. p. 312. Histoire des Voyages, tom. ii.

[87] M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands on the Roman empire.

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a As Gibbon's enumeration of the Roman provinces is not complete, we subjoin a list of them, as they existed in the time of Hadrian. The date of the formation of each is added, when known.

I. Sicilia, B.C. 241.

II. Sardinia, including Corsica, B.C. 238.

III. Hispania, originally divided into the two provinces of Citerior and Ulterior, B.C. 205; afterwards formed by Augustus into the three provinces of—1. Tarraconensis; 2. Bætica; 3. Lusitania.

IV. Gallia. The original province was Narbonensis, in the south-eastern part of the country, formed B.C. 118, frequently called simply Provincia. In B.C. 27 Augustus divided Gaul into four provinces: 1. Narbonensis; 2. Aquitania; 3. Lugdunensis; 4. Belgica. To these were subsequently added—5, Germania superior, along the Upper Rhine as far as Mayence; 6. Germania inferior, along the Lower Rhine, the chief town being Colonia Agrippinensis (*Cologne*). Among the Gallic provinces may also be classed the three Alpine provinces—7. Alpes Maritimæ (B.C. 14) received the Jus Latii from Nero; 8. Alpes Cottiæ, made a province by Nero; 9. Alpes Pennine, mentioned as a province before the time of Aurelian.

V. Britannia, A.D. 51.

VI. Rhætia and Vindelicia, B.C. 15.

VII. Noricum, B.C. 15.

VIII. Pannonia, A.D. 8.

IX. Dalmatia, formerly Illyricum.

X. Mœsia, B.C. 29.

XI. Dacia, A.D. 106.

XII. Thracia, A.D. 46.

XIII. Macedonia, B.C. 146.

XIV. Achaia with Epirus.

XV. Asia, B.C. 129, including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, Phrygia.

XVI. Bithynia and Pontus. Bithynia, extending from the mouth of the Rhyndacus to the town Heraclea, was made a

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The Columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts, and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their names of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain.[a] It is easier to deplore the fate than to describe the actual condition of Corsica.[b] Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms; whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence.[c] The Mediterranean with its islands.

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually General idea of the Roman empire.

province in B.C. 74. To this was subsequently added the western part of the kingdom of Pontus.

XVII. Pontus Polemoniacus, the eastern part of Pontus, extending from Polemonium to Trapezus (Trebizond), formed into a province by Nero, A.D. 63.

XVIII. Galatia, B.C. 25, included the southern and eastern part of Phrygia, Pisidia, Isauria, and a part of Lycaonia and Pamphylia.

XIX. Cappadocia, A.D. 17.

XX. Pamphylia, B.C. 25; to which Lycia was added A.D. 43.

XXI. Cilicia, B.C. 64.

XXII. Syria, B.C. 64, was divided by Hadrian into three provinces: 1. Syria proper; 2. Syria Phœnice; 3. Syria Palæstina.

XXIII. Commagene, a small district of Syria on the Euphrates, A.D. 73, but had been also a province from A.D. 17 to 38.

XXIV. Arabia, A.D. 105.

XXV. Ægyptus, B.C. 30.

XXVI. Cyrene and Creta; the former B.C. 74, the latter B.C. 67.

XXVII. Africa, B.C. 146, containing the dominions of Carthage.

XXVIII. Numidia, A.D. 39.

XXIX. Mauritania, A.D. 42, divided into the two provinces of Tingitana and Cæsariensis.

The best account of the Roman provinces is given by Marquardt in Becker's Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, vol. iii. pt. 1.—S.

[a] Minorca was lost to Great Britain in 1782. Ann. Register for that year.—M.

[b] The gallant struggles of the Corsicans for their independence under Paoli were brought to a close in the year 1769. This volume was published in 1776. See Botta, Storia d' Italia, vol. xiv.—M.

[c] Malta, it need scarcely be said, is now in the possession of the English. We have not, however, thought it necessary to notice every change in the political state of the world since the time of Gibbon.—M.

usurped the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.[88] But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian require a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia to Mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended in length more than three thousand miles, from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well-cultivated land.[89]

[88] Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4: a very useful collection.

[89] See Templeman's Survey of the Globe: but I distrust both the Doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Union and internal Prosperity of the Roman Empire in the Age of the Antonines.

It is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis.[1] Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and tradsient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany.[2] But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors. Principles of government.

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord. Universal spirit of toleration.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth.[3] Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a Of the people.

[1] They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Delhi. The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus.

[2] See M. de Guignes, Histoire des Huns, l. xv. xvi. and xvii.

[3] There is not any writer who describes in so lively a manner as Herodotus the true genius of polytheism. The best commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion; and the best contrast in Bossuet's Universal History.

Some

dream or an omen, a singular disorder or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch.[4] Such was the mild spirit of antiquity,

Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, Sat. xv.); and the Christians, as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception; so important indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work.[a]

[4] The rights, powers, and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the xvth book of the Iliad; in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer.[b]

[a] M. Constant, in his very learned and eloquent work, 'Sur la Religion,' with the two additional volumes, 'Du Polytheisme Romain,' has considered the whole history of polytheism in a tone of philosophy which, without subscribing to all his opinions, we may be permitted to admire. "The boasted tolerance of polytheism did not rest upon the respect due from society to the freedom of individual opinion. The polytheistic nations, tolerant as they were towards each other, as separate states, were not the less ignorant of the eternal principle, the only basis of enlightened toleration, that every one has a right to worship God in the manner which seems to him the best. Citizens, on the contrary, were bound to conform to the religion of the state; they had not the liberty to adopt a foreign religion, though that religion might be legally recognised in their own city for the strangers who were its votaries."—Sur la Religion, v. 184. Du Polyth. Rom. ii. 308. At this time the growing religious indifference, and the general administration of the empire by Romans, who, being strangers, would do no more than protect, not enlist themselves in the cause of the local superstitions, had introduced great laxity. But intolerance was clearly the theory both of the Greek and Roman law. The subject is more fully considered in another place.—M.

[b] There is a curious coincidence between Gibbon's expressions and those of the newly recovered 'De Republica' of Cicero, though the argument is rather the converse, lib. i. c. 36: "Sive hæc ad utilitatem vitæ constituta sint a principi-

that the nations were less attentive to the difference, than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves that, under various names and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almost a regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world.[5]

Of philosophers.

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature as a very curious and important speculation; and in the profound inquiry they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding.[6] Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the Spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but the ingenuous youth, who, from every part, resorted to Athens and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept as divine truths the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or that he should adore as gods those imperfect beings whom he must have despised as men? Against such unworthy adversaries Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well assured that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the

[5] See, for instance, Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 17. Within a century or two the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

[6] The admirable work of Cicero, de Naturâ Deorum, is the best clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyss. He represents with candour, and confutes with subtlety, the opinions of the philosophers.

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bus rerum publicarum, ut rex putaretur unus esse in cœlo, qui nutu, ut ait Homerus, totum Olympum converteret, idemque et rex et pater haberetur omnium."—M.

gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.[7]

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interest of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods, and, sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.[8]

Of the magistrate.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected,

[7] I do not pretend to assert, that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of superstition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c., had lost their efficacy.

[8] Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was assiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. x. 10.[a]

[a] Gibbon seems here to have followed the Latin version, but the words of Laertius are, — τῆς μὲν γὰρ πρὸς θεοὺς ὁσιότητος, καὶ πρὸς πατρίδα φιλίας, ἄδηλος ἡ διάθεσις. Ὑπερβολῇ γὰρ ἐπιεικείας, οὐδὲ πολιτείας ἥψατο; — this is, as regards piety towards the gods and affection towards his country, his disposition cannot be told. Laertius first relates several circumstances by which his filial and fraternal love and his kindness towards his slaves may be known, and then proceeds to say that nothing is known about his piety towards the gods or his patriotism, adding, as a reason for the latter, that he never took part in politics. —S.

as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods.[9] But, whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes; and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods and the rich ornaments of their temples;[10] but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids:[11] but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.[12]

In the provinces.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world,[13] who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country.[14] Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy.[15] But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold

At Rome.

[9] Polybius, l. vi. c. 56. Juvenal, Sat. xiii., laments that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect.

[10] See the fate of Syracuse, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c., the conduct of Verres, in Cicero (Actio ii. Orat. 4), and the usual practice of governors, in the viiith Satire of Juvenal.

[11] Sueton. in Claud. [25]—Plin. Hist. Nat. xxx. 1 [4].

[12] Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, tom. vi. p. 230–252.

[13] Seneca, Consolat. ad Helviam, [c. 6] p. 74, edit. Lips.

[14] Dionysius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. ii. [vol. i. p. 275, edit. Reiske.]

[15] In the year of Rome 701 the temple of Isis and Serapis was demolished by the order of the Senate (Dion Cassius, l. xl. [c. 47] p. 252), and even by the hands of the consul (Valerius Maximus, 1, 3).[a] After the death of Cæsar it was restored at the

[a] Gibbon here blends into one, two events, distant a hundred and sixty-six years from each other. It was in the year of Rome 535 that the senate, having ordered the destruction of the temples of Isis and Serapis, no workman would lend his hand; and the consul, L. Æmilius Paulus, himself (Valer. Max. 1, 3) seized the axe, to give the first blow. Gibbon attributes this circumstance to the second demolition, which took place in the year 701, and which he considers as the first. —W.

and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities.[16] Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies;[17] and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country.[18] Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.[19]

Freedom of Rome.

II. The narrow policy of preserving, without any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune and hastened the ruin of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians.[20] During the most flourishing æra of the Athenian commonwealth the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty[21] to twenty-one thousand.[22] If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the Social War, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men able to bear arms in the service of their country.[23]

public expense (Dion, l. xlvii. [c. 15] p. 501). When Augustus was in Egypt he revered the majesty of Serapis (Dion, l. li. [c. 16] p. 647); but in the Pomœrium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worship of the Egyptian gods (Dion, l. liii. [c. 2] p. 697, l. liv. [c. 6] p. 735). They remained, however, very fashionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. i. [v. 77]) and that of his successor, till the justice of Tiberius was provoked to some acts of severity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii. 85; Joseph. Antiquit. l. xviii. c. 3.)

[16] Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6, p. 74, edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their establishment to the devotion of the Flavian family.

[17] See Livy, l. xi. [12] [Suppl.] and xxix. [11.]

[18] Macrob. Saturnalia, l. iii. c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation.

[19] Minucius Felix in Octavio, p. 54 [p. 52, Leyden ed. 1672]. Arnobius, l. vi. p. 115.

[20] Tacit. Annal. xi. 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim is a complete history of the progressive admission of Latium, Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome.

[21] Herodotus, v. 97. It should seem, however, that he followed a large and popular estimation.

[22] Athenæus, Deipnosophist. l. vi. [c. 103] p. 272, edit. Casaubon. Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 4.[a]

[23] See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each Lustrum in M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. iv. c. 4.[b]

[a] On the number of citizens in Athens, compare Bœckh, Public Economy of Athens (English tr.) p. 45 et seq. Fynes Clinton, Essay in Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. 381.—M.

[b] All these questions are placed in an

When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic,[24] and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the vanquished nations only as the first and most honourable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes, who adopted the maxims of Augustus, guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.[25]

Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate.[26] The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital,[a] were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded.

Italy.

[24] Appian. de Bell. Civil. l. i. [c. 53]. Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 15, 16, 17.

[25] Mæcenas had advised him to declare, by one edict, all his subjects citizens. But we may justly suspect that the historian Dion was the author of a counsel so much adapted to the practice of his own age, and so little to that of Augustus.

[26] The senators were obliged to have one-third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one-fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces.

entirely new point of view by Niebuhr (Römische Geschichte, vol. i. p. 464). He rejects the census of Servius Tullius as unhistoric (vol. ii. p. 78 et seq.), and he establishes the principle that the census comprehended all the confederate cities which had the right of Isopolity.—M.

[a] It may be doubted whether the municipal government of the cities was not the old Italian constitution rather than a transcript from that of Rome. The free government of the cities, observes Savigny, was the leading characteristic of Italy. Geschichte des Römischen Rechts, i. p. 16.—M.

by the merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian: it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence.[27]

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece,[28] and in Gaul,[29] it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre, were dismissed from their thrones as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

The provinces.

"Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very just observation of Seneca,[30] confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may

Colonies and municipal towns.

[27] The first part of the Verona Illustrata of the Marquis Maffei gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Cæsars.[a]

[28] See Pausanias, l. vii. [c. 16]. The Romans condescended to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

[29] They are frequently mentioned by Cæsar. The Abbé Dubos attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Françoise, l. i. c. 4.

[30] Seneca in Consolat. ad Helviam, c. 7.

[a] Compare Denina, Revol. d' Italia, l. ii. c. 6, p. 100, 4to. edit.

remark, that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day by the cruel orders of Mithridates.[31] These voluntary exiles were engaged, for the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts, and the most convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and as they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages.[32] The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome.[33] The right of Latium, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted a more partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families.[34] Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions;[35] those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater

[31] Memnon apud Photium (c. 33) [p. 231, ed. Bekker]. Valer. Maxim. ix. 2 [ext. 3]. Plutarch [Sulla, c. 24] and Dion Cassius [p. 74, Fr. 176] swell the massacre to 150,000 citizens; but I should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.

[32] Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain (see Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, 4, iv. 35); and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath, still remain considerable cities. (See Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whitaker's History of Manchester, l. i. c. 3.)

[33] Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, xvi. 13. The Emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of *Municipia*, should solicit the title of *colonies*. Their example, however, became fashionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. xiii.

[34] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8, p. 62.

[35] Aristid. in Romæ Encomio, tom. i. p. 218, edit. Jebb.

number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome.[36] Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

Division of the Latin and the Greek provinces.

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue.[37] The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the East was less docile than the West to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain,* Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia,[38] that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains or among the peasants.[39] Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials.

[36] Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hist. iv. 74.

[37] See Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5 [s. 6]. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, xix. 7. Lipsius de Pronunciatione Linguæ Latinæ, c. 3.

[38] Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the Life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions.*

[39] The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may observe that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the Punic; whilst he had almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor would speak Latin (Apolog. p. 556). The greater part of St. Austin's congregations were strangers to the Punic.

* Mr. Hallam contests this assertion as regards Britain. "Nor did the Romans ever establish their language, I know not whether they wished to do so, in this island, as we perceive by that stubborn British tongue which has survived two conquests." In his note Mr. Hallam examines the passage from Tacitus (Agric. xxi.) to which Gibbon refers. It merely asserts the progress of Latin studies among the higher orders. Midd. Ages, iii. 276. Probably it was a kind of court language and that of public affairs, and prevailed in the Roman colonies.—M.

more tedious method of propagation.[a] In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude.[49] The existence of a slave became an object of greater value; and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.[50]

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse.[51] It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even

Enfranchisement.

[49] See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children, fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all, most probably, of the Imperial age.

[50] See the Augustan History [Spartian. Hadr. 18], and a Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.

[51] See another Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.

[a] An active slave-trade, which was carried on in many quarters, particularly the Euxine, the eastern provinces, the coast of Africa, and Britain, must be taken into the account. Blair, 23-32.—M.

these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation.[52] Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

Numbers.

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers.[53] Without interpreting in their utmost strictness the liberal appellations of legions and myriads,[54] we may venture to pronounce that the proportion of slaves who were valued as property was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense.[55] The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents.[56] Almost every profession, either liberal[57] or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury.[58] It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; and in the country slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace of Rome.[59] The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her

[52] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16, p. 124, &c.

[53] Seneca de Clementiâ, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculi imminueret si servi nostri numerare nos cœpissent."

[54] See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. [c. 47]) and Athenæus (Deipnosophist. l. vi. [c. 103] p. 272). The latter boldly asserts that he knew very many (πάμπολλοι) Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves.

[55] In Paris there are not more than 43,700 domestics of every sort, not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Messange, Recherches sur la Population, p. 186

[56] A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling: Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13. [On the prices of slaves, Blair, 149.—M.]

[57] Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence.

[58] Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.

[59] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They were all executed for not preventing their master's murder.

property.[60] A freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.[61]

Populousness of the Roman empire.

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed that, when the emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed in the time of Claudius about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world.[a] The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons: a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe,[62] and forms the most numerous

[60] Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548, edit. Delphin.

[61] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.

[62] Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de l'Histoire Générale.[b]

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[a] Zumpt, in his Dissertation quoted below, asserts it to be a "gross error in Gibbon to reckon the number of slaves equal to that of the free population. The luxury and magnificence of the great (he observes) at the commencement of the empire must not be taken as the groundwork of calculations for the whole Roman world. The agricultural labourer, and the artisan, in Spain, Gaul, Britain, Syria, and Egypt, maintained himself, as in the present day, by his own labour and that of his household, without possessing a single slave." Yet so completely was slavery rooted in the social system, both in the East and the West, that, in the great diffusion of wealth at this time, every one, I doubt not, who could afford a domestic slave, kept one; and generally the number of slaves was in proportion to the wealth. I do not believe that the cultivation of the soil by slaves was confined to Italy; the holders of large estates in the provinces would probably, either from choice or necessity, adopt the same mode of cultivation. The latifundia, says Pliny, had ruined Italy, and had begun to ruin the provinces. Slaves were no doubt employed in agricultural labour to a great extent in Sicily; and were the estates of those six enormous landholders, who were said to have possessed the whole province of Africa, cultivated altogether by free coloni? Whatever may have been the case in the rural districts, in the towns and cities the household duties were almost entirely discharged by slaves, and vast numbers belonged to the public establishments.—M. 1845.

[b] The following are the details of the

society that has ever been united under the same system of government.[a]

Obedience and union.

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The

present (1854) population of Europe, taken from the latest and best authorities :—

France	35,781,628
Austrian Empire (exclusive of the Italian dominions)	31,506,974
Prussia	16,112,948
Germanic States	15,302,561
Italy	24,401,063
Great Britain and Ireland	27,452,262
Spain	14,216,219
Portugal	3,471,199
Russia, including Poland	58,903,035
Turkey	15,500,000
Greece	1,002,102
Ionian Islands	219,797
Sweden and Norway	4,645,007
Denmark	2,296,597
Belgium	4,359,090
Holland	3,168,006
Switzerland	2,390,116
Total	260,728,604

—S.

[a] The subject of the population of the Roman empire has been investigated by two writers of great industry and learning —M. Dureau de la Malle, in his Economie Politique des Romains, liv. ii. c. 1 to 8, and M. Zumpt, in a dissertation printed in the Transactions of the Berlin Academy, 1840. M. Dureau de la Malle confines his inquiry almost entirely to the city of Rome, and Roman Italy. Zumpt examines at greater length the axiom, which he supposes to have been assumed by Gibbon as unquestionable, "that Italy and the Roman world were never so populous as in the time of the Antonines." Though this probably was Gibbon's opinion, he has not stated it so peremptorily as asserted by M. Zumpt. It had before been expressly laid down by Hume, and his statement was controverted by Wallace and by Malthus. Gibbon says that there is no reason to believe the country (of Italy) less populous in the age of the Antonines than in that of Romulus; and Zumpt acknowledges that we have no satisfactory knowledge of the state of Italy at that early age. Zumpt, in my opinion with some reason, takes the period just before the first Punic war as that in which Roman Italy (all south of the Rubicon) was most populous. From that time the numbers began to diminish, at first from the enormous waste of life out of the free population in the foreign, and afterwards in the civil wars; from the cultivation of the soil by slaves; towards the close of the republic, from the repugnance to marriage, which resisted alike the dread of legal punishment and the offer of legal immunity and privilege; and from the depravity of manners, which interfered with the procreation, the birth, and the rearing of children. The arguments and the authorities of Zumpt are equally conclusive as to the decline of population in Greece. Still the details which he himself adduces as to the prosperity and populousness of Asia Minor and the whole of the Roman East, with the advancement of the European provinces, especially Gaul, Spain, and Britain, in civilization, and therefore in populousness (for I have no confidence in the vast numbers sometimes assigned to the barbarous inhabitants of these countries), may, I think, fairly compensate for any deduction to be made from Gibbon's general estimate on account of Greece and Italy. Gibbon himself acknowledges his own estimate to be vague and conjectural. —M.

established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber. The legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force.[63] In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence both of the prince and people were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Roman monuments.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention: but they are rendered more interesting by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

Many of them erected at private expense.

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble.[64] The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before edifices, of a

[63] Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii. c. 16 [§ 4]. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the historian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

[64] Sueton. in August. c. 28. Augustus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and basilica of Caius and Lucius; the porticos of Livia and Octavia; and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the sovereign was imitated by his ministers and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.

smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona.[65] The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work that might deserve the curiosity of strangers or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation.[66] The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

Example of Herodes Atticus.

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to *use it. Abuse it then*, replied the monarch, with a goodnatured peevishness; for it is your own.[67] Many will be of opinion that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's last instructions, since he expended the greatest

[65] See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, l. iv. p. 68.

[66] See the xth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works carried on at the expense of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a gymnasium, and a theatre which had already cost near ninety thousand pounds; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Sinope.

[67] Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treasure-trove between the right of property and that of discovery. Hist. August. p. 9 [Spartian. Hadr. c. 18.]

part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hundred thousand pounds) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their complaints by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense.[68]

His reputation.

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator, according to the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the Forum or the Senate. He was honoured with the consulship at Rome: but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens and his adjacent villas; perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival.[69] The monuments of his genius have perished; some considerable ruins still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence: modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum,[a] designed by Pericles for musical performances and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over barbaric greatness; as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored

[68] Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. [c. 3] p. 548.

[69] Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i. 2, ix. 2, xviii. 10, xix. 12. Philostrat. p. 564 [l. ii. c. 14].

[a] The Odeum served for the rehearsal of new comedies as well as tragedies; they were read or repeated before representation without music or decorations, &c. No piece could be represented in the theatre if it had not been previously approved by judges for this purpose. The king of Cappadocia who restored the Odeum, which had been burnt by Sylla, was Ariobarzanes. See Martini, Dissertation on the Odeons of the Ancients, Leipsic, 1767, p. 10-91.—W.

its ancient beauty and magnificence.[a] Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the temple of Neptune in the Isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favours; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor.[70]

Most of the Roman monuments for public use; temples; theatres; aqueducts, &c.

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom; whilst the sovereignty of the people was represented in the majestic edifices destined to the public use;[71] nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury was more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace and to the genius of Rome.[72] These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple of Peace a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned.[b] At a small distance from thence was situated the Forum of Trajan. It was surrounded with a lofty portico in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and spacious entrance: in the

[70] See Philostrat. l. ii. [c. 3-11] p. 548-560. Pausanias, l. i. [c. 19] and vii. 20. The Life of Herodes, in the xxxth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.

[71] It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciæ, p. 8 [vol. ii.] inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudson.[c]

[72] Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii. c. 4, 5, 6; Nardini, Roma Antica, l. iii. 11, 12, 13; and a MS. description of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny [xxxv. 36, 6 and 20], as in the Temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus.

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[a] Gibbon has here fallen into an error. The Odeum of Herodes was a different building from the Odeum of Pericles: the former was under the south-western extremity of the Acropolis, the latter under the south-eastern extremity.—S.

[b] The emperor Vespasian, who had caused the Temple of Peace to be built, transported to it the greatest part of the pictures, statues, and other works of art which had escaped the civil tumults. It was there that every day the artists and the learned of Rome assembled; and it is on the site of this temple that a multitude of antiques have been dug up. See notes of Reimarus on Dion Cassius, lxvi. c. 15, p. 1088.—W.

[c] See also Demosth. c. Aristocr. p. 689. —S.

centre arose a column of marble, whose height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and, by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, witnout the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.[73]

Number and greatness of the cities of the empire.

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I. *Ancient* Italy is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities; and for whatsoever æra of antiquity the expression might be intended,[74] there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted.[a]

In Italy.

[73] Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv. p. 2, l. i. c. 9. Fabretti has composed a very learned treatise on the aqueducts of Rome.

[74] Ælian. Hist. Var. lib. ix. c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, l. iv. c. 21.

[a] This may in some degree account for the difficulty started by Livy, as to the incredibly numerous armies raised by the small states around Rome, where in his time a scanty stock of free soldiers among a larger population of Roman

Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which *they* experienced were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna. II. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities;[75] and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy.[76] Many were the cities of Gaul—Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, Vienne, Lyons, Langres, and Trèves—whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, if we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian.[77] III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage,[78] nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors: Carthage itself rose with new splendour from its ashes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered

Gaul, and Spain.

Africa.

[75] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16 [§ 4]. The number, however, is mentioned, and should be received, with a degree of latitude.[a]

[76] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5.

[77] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, 4, iv. 35. The list seems authentic and accurate: the division of the provinces, and the different condition of the cities, are minutely distinguished.

[78] Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii. p. 1189 [833, ed. Casaubon.]

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slaves broke the solitude. Quæ (loca) nunc, vix seminario exiguo militum relicto, servitia Romana ab solitudine vindicant, Liv. vi. c. 12. Compare Appian Bell. Civ. i. 7.—M. subst. for G.

[a] Without doubt no reliance can be placed on this passage of Josephus. The historian makes Agrippa give advice to the Jews as to the power of the Romans; and the speech is full of declamation which can furnish no conclusions to history. While enumerating the nations subject to the Romans, he speaks of the Gauls as submitting to 1200 soldiers (which is false, as there were eight legions in Gaul, Tac. An. iv. 5), while there are nearly twelve hundred cities.—G. Josephus (*infra*) places these eight legions on the Rhine, as Tacitus does.—M.

all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty. IV. The provinces of the East present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed by ignorance to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities,[79] enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate.[80] Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour is still displayed in its ruins.[81] Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen.[82] If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of Asia?[83] The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a still superior rank in the empire; Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities,[84] and yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome itself.

Asia.

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of

Roman roads.

[79] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16 [§ 4]. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. [V. Herod. c. 3] p. 548, edit. Olear.

[80] Tacit. Annal. iv. 55. I have taken some pains in consulting and comparing modern travellers with regard to the fate of those eleven cities of Asia. Seven or eight are totally destroyed: Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the name of Guzel-hissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great city, peopled by an hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.

[81] See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.

[82] Strabo, l. xii. p. 866 [578, ed. Casaubon.] He had studied at Tralles.

[83] See a Dissertation of M. de Boze, Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xviii. Aristides pronounced an oration, which is still extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities.

[84] The inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted to seven millions and a half (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16 [§ 4]). Under the military government of the Mamalukes, Syria was supposed to contain sixty thousand villages (Histoire de Timur Bec, l. v. c. 20).

communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles.[85] The public roads were accurately divided by milestones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams.[86] The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite.[87] Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish throughout their extensive dominions the regular institution of posts.[88] Houses were everywhere erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of those relays it was easy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads.[89] The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or conveniency of private citizens.[90] Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The

Posts.

[85] The following Itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London, 227. III. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich, 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne, 45. V. Rheims, 174. VI. Lyons, 330. VII. Milan, 324. VIII. Rome, 426. IX. Brundusium, 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium, 40. XI. Byzantium, 711. XII. Ancyra, 283. XIII. Tarsus, 301. XIV. Antioch, 141. XV. Tyre, 252. XVI. Jerusalem, 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 English miles. See the Itineraries published by Wesseling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.

[86] Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée (tom. 4, p. 2, l. 1, c. 5), has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c.

[87] Bergier, Histoire des Grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. 1-28.

[88] Procopius in Hist. Arcana, c. 30. Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodosian. l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506-563, with Godefroy's learned commentary.

[89] In the time of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius, Orat. xxii.; and the Itineraria, p. 572-581.

[90] Pliny, though a favourite and a minister, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business. Epist. x. 121, 122.

provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean: and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tiber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was an useful monument of Roman greatness.[91] From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the Columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten to Alexandria in Egypt.[92] Navigation.

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The East was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury: whilst the West was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilised nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt;[93] but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy; and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer the vine grew wild in Improvement of agriculture in the western countries of the empire.

Introduction of fruits, &c.

[91] Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.

[92] Plin. Hist. Natur. xix. 1. [in Procem.][a]

[93] It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phœnicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marseilles and Gades.

[a] Pliny says Puteoli, which seems to have been the usual landing-place from the East. See the voyages of St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 13, and of Josephus, Vita, c. 3.—M.

the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants.[94] A thousand years afterwards Italy could boast that, of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil.[95] The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul.[96] This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines.[97] 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant; it was naturalised in those countries, and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience.[98] 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown.[99] 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media.[100] The assured supply of wholesome

The vine.

The olive.

Flax.

Artificial grasses.

[94] See Homer, Odyss. l. ix. v. 358.

[95] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xiv. [11, s. 13.]

[96] Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 223 [178, ed. Casaubon.] The intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients.[a]

[97] In the beginning of the fourth century the orator Eumenius (Panegyr. Veter. viii. 6, edit. Delphin. [vii. 6, p. 437, ed. Arntzen.]) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is supposed by M. d'Anville to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present, for one of the first growths of Burgundy.[b]

[98] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xv. [1.]

[99] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xix. [1 and 2.]

[100] See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of lucerne.

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[a] It appears, from the newly discovered treatise of Cicero de Republica, that there was a law of the republic prohibiting the culture of the vine and olive beyond the Alps, in order to keep up the value of those in Italy. Nos *justissimi* homines, qui transalpinas gentes oleam et vitem serere non sinimus, quo pluris sint nostra oliveta nostrique vineæ. Lib. iii. 9. The restrictive law of Domitian was veiled under the decent pretext of encouraging the cultivation of grain. Suet. Dom. 7. It was repealed by Probus. Vopisc. Probus, 18.—M.

[b] This is proved by a passage of Pliny the Elder, where he speaks of a certain kind of grape (vitis picata, vinum picatum) which grows naturally in the district of Vienne, and had recently been transplanted into the country of the Arverni (Auvergne), of the Helvii (the Vivarais), the Sequani (Burgundy and Franche Comté). Pliny wrote A.D. 77. Hist. Nat. xiv. 1 [s. 3, sq.].—W.

and plentiful food for the cattle during winter multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed that those famines which so frequently afflicted the infant republic were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours. General plenty.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride, or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious. Arts of luxury.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was Foreign trade.

brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity.[101] There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the East; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon,[102] was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire.[103] The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling; silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold;[104] precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond;[105] and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only,[a] instrument of commerce. It was a complaint

Gold and silver.

[101] Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvii. [7] 11. The latter observed, with some humour, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities on the spot where it was produced, the coast of modern Prussia.

[102] Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serindib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the East.

[103] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. vi. [23, s. 26.] Strabo, l. xvii. [p. 798.]

[104] Hist. August. p. 224. [Vopisc. Aurel. c. 45.] A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.

[105] The two great pearl-fisheries were the same as at present, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281.

[a] Certainly not the only one. The Indians were not so contented with regard to foreign productions. Arrian has a long list of European wares which they received in exchange for their own; Italian and other wines, brass, tin, lead, coral, chrystolith, storax, glass, dresses of one or many colours, zones, &c. See Periplus Maris Erythræi in Hudson, Geogr. Min. i. p. 28.—W. The German translator observes that Gibbon has confined the use of aromatics to religious worship and funerals. His error seems, the omission of other spices, of which the Romans must

worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations.[106] The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling.[107] Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the proportion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase.[108] There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that, whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt and honestly confessed by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true prin- General felicity. "ciples of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which "had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly "established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence "the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and "common language. They affirm that, with the improvement of "arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the "increasing splendour of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, "cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long "festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful "of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of "future danger."[109] Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation which seems to prevail in these

[106] Tacit. Annal. iii. 53. In a speech of Tiberius.

[107] Plin. Hist. Natur. xii. 18 [41]. In another place he computes half that sum; Quingenties H. S. for India exclusive of Arabia.

[108] The proportion, which was 1 to 10, and 12½, rose to 14⅔, the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of ancient Coins, c. 5.

[109] Among many other passages, see Pliny (Hist. Natur. iii. 6), Aristides (de Urbe Româ), and Tertullian (de Animâ, c. 30).

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have consumed great quantities in their cookery. Wenck, however, admits that silver was the chief article of exchange. —M.

In 1787 a peasant (near Nellore in the Carnatic) struck, in digging, on the remains of a Hindu temple; he found also a pot which contained Roman coins and medals of the second century, mostly Trajans, Hadrians, and Faustinas, all of gold, many of them fresh and beautiful, others defaced or perforated, as if they had been worn as ornaments. Asiatic Researches, ii. 19.—M.

passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

Decline of courage;

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

of genius.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit.[110] The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are studied by

[110] Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo above eight thousand pounds for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. i. [V. Herod. c. 7], p. 538. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy were maintained at the public expense for the instruction of youth.[a] The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmæ, between three and four hundred pounds, a year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. [3], p. 352, edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. ii. [V. Theod.] p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21 [Capitol. Ant. P. c. 11]. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. [c. 31] p. 1195. Juvenal himself, in a morose satire, which in every line betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say,

—— O Juvenes, circumspicit et stimulat vos,
Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quærit.—Satir. vii. 20.

[a] Vespasian first gave a salary to professors; he assigned to each professor of rhetoric, Greek and Roman, centena sestertia. (Sueton. in Vesp. 18.) Hadrian and the Antonines, though still liberal, were less profuse.—G. from W. Suetonius wrote annua centena. = £. 807, 5, 10. —M.

those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations: or, if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by an uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients who, by expressing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.

Degeneracy.

The sublime Longinus, who in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as "some children always remain pigmies, whose infant limbs have "been too closely confined; thus our tender minds, fettered by the "prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand "themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we "admire in the ancients, who, living under a popular government, "wrote with the same freedom as they acted."[111] This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and, after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

[111] Longin. de Sublim. c. 44, p. 229, edit. Toll. Here, too, we may say of Longinus, "his own example strengthens all his laws." Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution; puts them into the mouth of a friend, and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a show of refuting them himself.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

Idea of a monarchy.

THE obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connexion between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people.[a] A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprises of an aspiring prince.

Situation of Augustus.

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the victory of Actium the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Cæsar by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Augustus by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions,[1] conscious of their own strength and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated during twenty years' civil war to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Cæsar, from whence alone they had received and expected the most lavish rewards. The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the

[1] Orosius, vi. 18.[b]

[a] Often enough in the ages of superstition, though not in the interest of the people or the state, but in that of the church, to which all others were subordinate. Yet the power of the pope has often been of great service in repressing the excesses of sovereigns, and in softening manners.—W. The history of the Italian republics proves the error of Gibbon, and the justice of his German translator's comment.—M.

[b] Dion says twenty-five (or three) (lv. 23). The united triumvirs had but forty-three (Appian. Bell. Civ. iv. 3). The testimony of Orosius is of little value when more certain may be had.—W.

master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing with a secret pleasure the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power the senate had lost its dignity; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honour from it.[2]

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the list of the senators, expelled a few members[b] whose vices or whose obstinacy required a public example, persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat, raised the qualification of a senator to about ten thousand pounds, created a sufficient number of patrician families, and accepted for himself the honourable title of Prince of the Senate, which had always been bestowed by the censors on the citizen the most eminent for his honours and services.[3][c] But, whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence of the senate. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.

He reforms the senate.

[2] Julius Cæsar introduced soldiers, strangers, and half-barbarians, into the senate (Sueton. in Cæsar, c. 80). The abuse became still more scandalous after his death.[a]

[3] Dion Cassius, l. lii. [c. 42] p. 693. Suetonius in August. c. 35.

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[a] See Dion Cass. l. xliii. 47. Sueton. Oct. 35.—S.

[b] Of these Dion and Suetonius knew nothing.—W. Dion says the contrary, *αὐτὸς μὲν οὐδένα αὐτῶν ἀπήλασεν*.—M.

[c] The title of Princeps Senatus was an honorary distinction, which neither was connected with any office nor conferred any privileges. Under the republic the censors usually bestowed this title upon the oldest of those who had filled the office of censor (Liv. xxvii. 11); but the censor in office appears sometimes to have received this title from his colleague (Liv. xl. 51). As Augustus was appointed Princeps Senatus when he discharged the duties of the censorship in his sixth consulship (B.C. 28) (Dion Cass. liii. 1), there is no doubt that he received the title from his colleague Agrippa, in accordance with ancient precedent. The name of the Princeps Senatus stood first in the *album Senatorum*, a list of the senate which was made public. This title, which only declared Augustus the chief of the senators, was the one he chose in preference to all others. See Tacit. Ann. i. cc. 1, 9, and Ovid, Fasti, ii. 412: "Tu (Romule) domini nomen, *principis* ille (Augustus) tenet."—S.

Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. "He lamented, yet excused, "his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge "of his father's murder; the humanity of his own nature had some- "times given way to the stern laws of necessity, and to a forced con- "nexion with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony lived, the "republic forbad him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman and a "barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and "his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all "their ancient rights; and wished only to mingle with the crowd of "his fellow-citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained "for his country."[4]

Resigns his power.

Is prevailed upon to resume it under the title of Emperor or General.

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate; those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate; and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of PROCONSUL and IMPERATOR.[5] But

[4] Dion (l. liii. [c. 3, *sqq.*] p. 698) gives us a prolix and bombast speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.

[5] *Imperator* (from which we have derived Emperor) signified under the republic no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman *emperors* assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.[a]

[a] This note of Gibbon implies, but does not state with sufficient clearness, the double use of the title *Imperator* by the Roman emperors. There was first the ancient use of the title, mentioned in Gibbon's note, which was bestowed upon the emperor by the soldiers after a victory, and placed after his name with the number of the victory; in this sense Augustus was imperator twenty-one times (Tacit. Ann. i. c. 9), and on the coins of his successors the title is found down to the time of Caracalla. There was, secondly, the new use of the title, which was conferred upon the emperor by the senate, and was prefixed to the imperial name (prænomen imperatoris, Sueton. Tib. c. 26); in this sense it was first con-

he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed; and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign.[6]

Power of the Roman generals.

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery.[7] The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the sentence was immediate and without appeal.[8] The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the use of

[6] Dion, l. liii. [c. 11] p. 703, &c. [c. 16, p. 709.—S.]

[7] Livy Epitom. l. xiv. Valer. Maxim. vi. 3.

[8] See, in the viiith book of Livy [c. 7 and 32], the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, was obliged to respect the principle.

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ferred upon Augustus, as stated in Gibbon's text (in B.C. 29), and was borne by all succeeding emperors (Dion Cass. lii. 41).

The title of Proconsul which Gibbon mentions as bestowed upon Augustus was the *imperium proconsulare* in its most extended meaning, which placed in his hands the government of all the provinces of the empire. See Eckhel, Doctrina Numorum Veterum, vol. viii. p. 339, seq.; Marquardt in Becker's Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, vol. iii. pt. iii. p. 295, seq.—S.

victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the East, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings.[9] Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to or assumed by the generals of the republic. They were at the same time the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

Lieutenants of the emperor.

From what has been already observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But, as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient proconsuls; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose *auspicious* influence the merit of their action was legally attributed.[10] They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to the senate that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of consular or prætorian dignity; the legions were commanded by senators; and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by

[9] By the lavish but unconstrained suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command scarcely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the distribution of three or four millions sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus.

[10] Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general who was authorised to take the Auspices in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor; and his most successful lieutenants were satisfied with some marks of distinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were invented in their favour.

an easy sacrifice. He represented to them that they had enlarged his powers even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces Augustus provided for his own power and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by soldiers.[a] A law was passed, that, wherever the emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion; and it was soon discovered that the authority of the

Division of the provinces between the emperor and the senate.

[a] A few supplemental remarks, corrective and illustrative, upon the provinces may be of use to the student. I. *The Provinces of the Senate.*—These were divided into two classes, consular and prætorian. Asia and Africa were the consular provinces; the rest were prætorian (Strab. xvii. p. 840; Dion Cass. liii. 13). The governors of these provinces were appointed in the ancient fashion, by lot, and for a single year (Sueton. Aug. 47; Dion Cass. liii. 13; Tacit. Ann. iii. 58), the two oldest consulars drawing lots for the consular provinces, and the two oldest prætorians for the prætorian provinces. All the governors of the senatorial provinces, whether consulars or prætorians, had the title of proconsul, but with this distinction in the insignia of their rank, that the proconsuls of Asia and Africa had 12 lictors each, and the remainder only 6 (Dion Cass. liii. 13). They did not, however, possess the military power, and therefore wore the toga, and not the paludamentum with the sword, as in the time of the republic (Dion Cass. *l. c.*). Consequently there were no legions in these provinces; but a small body of troops was placed at their disposal for the preservation of order.

II. *The Provinces of the Cæsar.*—These were governed by the emperor himself by means of his Legati. The larger provinces were administered by legati, who bore the title of *Legati Augusti pro prætore;* but, like the proconsuls of the senatorial provinces, these legati were divided into two classes according to their rank as consulars or prætorians. The most important provinces, in which there were several legions, were administered by legati consulares; while those in which there was only one legion, had legati prætorii; but the official title of both classes was the one mentioned above, namely, Legati Augusti pro prætore. The legati were nominated by the emperor, and continued in the administration of the province as long as he pleased; they wore the paludamentum, had the jus gladii, and all, whether consulars or prætorians, had also six lictors (Dion Cass. liii. 17; Tacit. Ann. ii. 17). There is no authority for the distinction made by Gibbon, when he says that the proconsuls of the senate were attended by lictors, and the lieutenants of the emperors by soldiers. In the imperial provinces officers called procuratores discharged the duties which were performed by the quæstors in the senatorial provinces. Besides the two classes of imperial provinces already mentioned, there was a third kind, comprising those regions which, on account of the nature of the country, the character of the inhabitants, and other causes, such as the Alpine districts, Judæa, and Ægypt, could not readily receive the provincial form and be administered according to Roman laws. Accordingly these countries were treated as if they were the private domains of the emperor, and were administered by his deputies, who bore the title of *procurator*, but in Ægypt that of *præfectus*. Some of the procuratorian provinces in

Prince, the favourite epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

The former preserves his military command and guards in Rome itself.

In return for this imaginary concession, Augustus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorised to preserve his military command, supported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by the military oath; but such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, till the homage of flattery was insensibly converted into an annual and solemn protestation of fidelity.

Consular and tribunitian powers.

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it as a very odious instrument, of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect in his own person all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular[11] and tribunitian offices,[12] which were, in the same manner, continued to all

[11] Cicero (de Legibus, iii. 3) gives the consular office the name of *Regia potestas*: and Polybius (l. vi. c. 3) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchical was represented and exercised by the consuls.

[12] As the tribunitian power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented for the dictator Cæsar (Dion, l. xliv. [c. 5] p. 384), we may easily conceive that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own Commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. i.

course of time received the ordinary organisation of the imperial provinces. The following table (taken from Marquardt) contains the provinces divided according to their classes:—

PROVINCES OF THE SENATE.		PROVINCES OF THE CÆSAR.		
Consular.	*Prætorian.*	*Consular.*	*Prætorian.*	*Procuratorian.*
1. Asia. 2. Africa.	1. Bætica. 2. Narbonensis. 3. Sardinia et Corsica. 4. Sicilia. 5. Macedonia. 6. Achaia. 7. Creta et Cyrene. 8. Cyprus. 9. Bithynia down to A.D. 103.	1. Tarraconensis. 2. Germania superior. 3. Germania inferior. 4. Britannia. 5. Pannonia superior. 6. Pannonia inferior. 7. Mœsia superior. 8. Mœsia inferior. 9. Dacia. 10. Dalmatia. 11. Cappadocia, from the time of Vespasian. 12. Syria.	1. Lusitania. 2. Aquitania. 3. Lugdunensis. 4. Belgica. 5. Galatia. 6. Pamphylia et Lycia down to A.D. 103. 7. Cilicia. 8. Commagene. 9. Arabia. 10. Armenia? 11. Mesopotamia? 12. Assyria? 13. Numidia.	1. Alpes Maritimæ. 2. Alpes Cottiæ. 3. Alpes Penninæ. 4. Rhætia (before Trajan). 5. Noricum. 6. Thracia (before Hadrian). 7. Epirus. 8. Pontus Polemoniacus. 9. Mauretania Tingitana. 10. Mauretania Cæsariensis. 11. Judæa. 12. Ægyptus, under a præfectus.

Marquardt, ut supra, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 239.—S.

his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general control of the finances was intrusted to their care; and though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction; but whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that decree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism.[13] The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and, as both in their private and public interest they were adverse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.[a]

[13] Augustus exercised nine annual consulships without interruption. He then most artfully refused that magistracy, as well as the dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual consulship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, to conceal so invidious a title.

[a] The imperial authority in the city rested chiefly upon the *tribunitia potestas*, which corresponded to the *jus tribunitium* of the republic. The *tribunitia potestas* secured to the emperor the inviolability of his person, the right of intercession against the resolutions of the senate and the people, and the right of summoning the senate and the people: this power moreover was possessed by the emperor in all parts of the empire, and was not confined, as in the republican period, to the city and a mile's distance from it (Comp. Dion Cass. li. 19; Sueton. Tib. c. 11). The emperors never called themselves tribunes, and, indeed, they could not be, as they were always patricians; but the importance they attached to the *tribunitia potestas* is shown by their adding it to their names to mark the years of their reigns. Marquardt, ut supra, vol. ii. pt. iii. p. 297; Höck, Römische Geschichte, vol. i. p. 337.—S.

Imperial prerogatives.

To these accumulated honours the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes of the Roman people.[a] If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorised to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things private or public, human or divine.[14]

The magistrates.

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *Imperial magistrate*, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, prætors, and tribunes[15] were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honours still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consulship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity,

[14] See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. ccxlii.[b]

[15] Two consuls were created on the calends of January; but in the course of the year others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twelve. The prætors were usually sixteen or eighteen. (Lipsius in Excurs. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. i.) I have not mentioned the Ædiles or Quæstors. Officers of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally possessed the right of *intercession*, though it might be dangerous to exercise it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name (Plin. Epist. i. 23).[c]

[a] Augustus never took the title of censor, but he possessed all the powers of the office, and discharged its duties, under the title of *præfectus morum*. (Sueton. Aug. 27.)—S.

[b] It is also in the edition of Tacitus by Ernesti (Excurs. ad lib. iv. 6), and in the Monumenta Legum by Haubold, p. 223.—S.

[c] But even as late as A.D. 218 the tribunes on one occasion summoned the senate in the absence of the consuls and prætors. (Dion Cass. lxxviii. 8.) The office continued to exist long after the time of Constantine, and is mentioned even as late as A.D. 423, in the time of Honorius and Theodosius. (Cod. Theodos. ii. tit. 1, l. 12; iv. tit. 11, l. 2.)—S.

which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens.[16] In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practised all the duties of an ordinary candidate.[17] But we may venture to ascribe to his councils the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.[18] The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

By declaring themselves the protectors of the people, Marius and Cæsar had subverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the administration of their own powers they frequently consulted the great national council, and *seemed* to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the supreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of

The senate.

[16] The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consul's tribunal that he would observe the laws (Plin. Panegyric. c. 64).

[17] Quoties Magistratuum Comitiis interesset, tribus cum candidatis suis circuibat: supplicabatque more solemni. Ferebat et ipse suffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in August. c. 56.

[18] Tum primum Comitia e campo ad patres translata sunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word *primum* seems to allude to some faint and unsuccessful efforts which were made towards restoring them to the people.*

* The emperor Caligula made the attempt: he restored the Comitia to the people, but, in a short time, took them away again. Sueton. Calig. c. 16; Dion Cass. lix. 9, 20. Nevertheless, at the time of Dion, they preserved still the form of the Comitia. Dion, lviii. 20.—W.

justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; but in its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held on three stated days in every month; the Calends, the Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals.[a]

General idea of the Imperial system.

To resume; in a few words, the system of the Imperial government; as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.[19]

Court of the emperors.

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life they affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freed-

[19] Dion Cassius (l. liii. [c. 12-18] p. 703-714) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the Imperial system. To illustrate and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bletterie, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv. xxv. xxvii. Beaufort, République Romaine, tom. i. p. 255-275. The Dissertations of Noodt and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*, printed at Leyden in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479-544 of his Opuscula. Maffei, Verona Illustrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.[b]

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[a] Gibbon has omitted to notice an important institution of Augustus, which eventually superseded the senate in many of its functions. This was the *Consilium*, a kind of privy council, which consisted of twenty members selected by the emperor from the senate, and in which all important matters of state were discussed before they were submitted to the senate. (Dion Cass. liii. 21, lvi. 28; comp. Sueton. Tiber. c. 35.) In course of time the power of the Consilium was augmented; instead of only discussing matters that were to be submitted to the senate, it acquired separate legislative and judicial authority. This important change appears to have been made in the time of Hadrian, probably to a great extent in consequence of his frequent absence from Rome. (Spartian. Hadrian. c. 22.)—S.

[b] See also the masterly dissertations of Eckhel, vol. viii. p. 325, *seq.*; Walter, Geschichte der Römischen Rechts, § 254, *seq.*; Höck, Römische Geschichte, vol. i. pt. i. p. 318, *seq.*; Marquardt, ut supra, vol. ii. pt. iii. p. 292, *seq.*—S.

men.[20] Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

Deification.

The deification of the emperors[21] is the only instance in which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices.[22] It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious spirit of the first Cæsar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign; he tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object;[23] but he contented himself with being revered by the senate and the people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that, on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods: and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral.[b] This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter

[20] A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the senate paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

[21] See a treatise of Van Dale de Consecratione Principum. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

[22] See a dissertation of the Abbé Mongault in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions.

[23] Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus *aras*, says Horace to the emperor himself, and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Augustus.[a]

[a] The good princes were not those who alone obtained the honours of an apotheosis: it was conferred on many tyrants. See an excellent treatise of Schoepflin, de Consecratione Imperatorum Romanorum, in his Commentationes historicæ et criticæ. Bâle, 1741, p. 1—84.—W.

[b] The curious satire the *ἀποκολοκύντωσις*, in the works of Seneca, is the strongest remonstrance of profaned religion.—M.

principles, was received with a very faint murmur[24] by the easy nature of Polytheism; but it was received as an institution, not of religion, but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Cæsar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

Titles of *Augustus* and *Cæsar*.

In the consideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not however conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia. It was stained with the blood of the proscription; and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Cæsar he had assumed as the adopted son of the dictator; but he had too much good sense either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation; and after a very serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity which he uniformly affected.[25a] *Augustus* was therefore a personal, *Cæsar* a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was bestowed; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors—Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans—from the fall of the republic to the present time. A dis-

[24] See Cicero in Philippic. i. 6. Julian in Cæsaribus. Inque Deûm templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expression of Lucan; but it is a patriotic rather than a devout indignation.

[25] Dion Cassius, l. liii. [c. 16] p. 710, with the curious Annotations of Reimar.

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[a] This title expressed something more. It recognised him as a being of a divine nature, and, on this account, entitled to the passive obedience of his subjects. Hence Dion says (liii. 16), Αὔγουστος, ὡς καὶ πλεῖόν τι ἢ κατὰ ἀνθρώπους ὤν, ἐπεκλήθη; and Vegetius (ii. 5) expresses still more clearly the full import of the word: "Nam imperatori, cum Augusti nomen accepit, tanquam præsenti et corporali deo fidelis est præstanda devotio et impendendus pervigil famulatus."—S.

tinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, whilst the name of Cæsar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian, at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.[a]

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him at the age of nineteen to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father, of the Roman world.[26] When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government. Character and policy of Augustus.

I. The death of Cæsar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honours on his adherents; but the most favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion; but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus,[27] would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæsar had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his Image of liberty for the people.

[26] As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Cæsars, his colour changed like that of the chameleon; pale at first, then red, afterwards black, he at last assumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces (Cæsars, p. 309). This image, employed by Julian in his ingenious fiction, is just and elegant; but when he considers this change of character as real, and ascribes it to the power of philosophy, he does too much honour to philosophy and to Octavianus.

[27] Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.[b]

[a] The princes who by their birth or their adoption belonged to the family of the Cæsars, took the name of Cæsar. After the death of Nero this name designated the Imperial dignity itself, and, afterwards, the appointed successor. The time at which it was employed in the latter sense cannot be fixed with certainty. Bach (Hist. Jurisprud. Rom. 304) affirms from Tacitus, H. i. 15, and Suetonius, Galba 17, that Galba conferred on Piso Licinianus the title of Cæsar, and from that time the term had this meaning: but these two historians simply say that he appointed Piso his successor, and do not mention the word Cæsar. Aurelius Victor (in Traj. [§ 11] p. 348, ed. Artzen) says that Hadrian first received this title on his adoption; but as the adoption of Hadrian is still doubtful, and, besides this, as Trajan on his death-bed was not likely to have created a new title for his successor, it is more probable that Ælius Verus was the first who was called Cæsar, when adopted by Hadrian. Spart. in Ælio Vero [c. 1].—W.

[b] In a very ingenious essay Gibbon has ventured to call in question the pre-eminent virtue of Brutus. Misc. Works, iv. 95.—M.

power as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or by even the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

Attempt of the senate after the death of Caligula.

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæsars, gave the watch-word *liberty* to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight-and-forty hours acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the prætorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the Imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe.[28]

Image of government for the armies.

II. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt, what the power of the soldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every social duty! He had heard their seditious clamours; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchased by immense rewards; but a second revolution might double those rewards. The troops professed the fondest attachment to the house of Cæsar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus summoned to his aid whatever remained in those fierce minds of

[28] It is much to be regretted that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of that transaction. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumours of Josephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.

Roman prejudices; enforced the rigour of discipline by the sanction of law; and, interposing the majesty of the senate between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance as the first magistrate of the republic.[29]

Their obedience.

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics:[a] the convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months four princes perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by *the authority of the senate*, and *the consent of the soldiers*.[30] The legions respected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.[31]

[29] Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil wars he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only Soldiers (Sueton. in August. c. 25). See the use Tiberius made of the senate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i. [c. 25]).

[30] These words seem to have been the constitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4.[b]

[31] The first was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days; the second, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may observe that both Camillus and Cassius coloured their ambition with the design of restoring the republic; a task, said Cassius, peculiarly reserved for his name and family.

[a] Caligula perished by a conspiracy formed by the officers of the prætorian troops, and Domitian would not perhaps have been assassinated without the participation of the two chiefs of that guard in his death.—W.

[b] This panegyric on the soldiery is rather too liberal. Claudius was obliged to purchase their consent to his coronation: the presents which he made, and those which the prætorians received on other occasions, considerably embarrassed the finances. Moreover, this formidable guard favoured, in general, the cruelties of the tyrants. The distant revolts were more frequent than Gibbon thinks: already, under Tiberius, the legions of Germany would have seditiously constrained Germanicus to assume the Imperial purple. On the revolt of Claudius Civilis, under Vespasian, the legions of Gaul murdered their general, and offered their assistance to the Gauls, who were in insurrection. Julius Sabinus made himself be proclaimed emperor, &c. The wars, the merit, and the severe discipline of Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines, established, for some time, a greater degree of subordination.—W.

In elective monarchies the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own over the provinces and the armies.[32] Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judæa. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father.[33]

Designation of a successor.

Of Tiberius.

Of Titus.

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him indeed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of an hundred years, to the name and family of the Cæsars; and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse that the prætorian guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant.[34] The rapid downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the instruments of *their* licence. The birth of Vespasian was mean: his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue,[35] his own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son whose more splendid and amiable character

The race of the Cæsars and the Flavian family.

[32] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 21.

[33] Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Præfat. Hist. Natur.

[34] This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist. i. 5, 16, ii. 76.

[35] The emperor Vespasian, with his usual good sense, laughed at the genealogists, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Suet. in Vespasian. c. 12.

might turn the public attention from the obscure origin to the future glories of the Flavian house. Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared him his colleague and successor in the empire.[36] It is sincerely to be lamented, that, whilst we are fatigued with the disgustful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus and the virtue of Trajan.[37]

A.D. 96. Adoption and character of Trajan.

A.D. 98.

We may readily believe that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption;[38] the truth of which could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute detail of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and

A.D. 117. Of Hadrian.

[36] Dion, l. lxviii. [c. 3] p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric. [c. 7.]

[37] Felicior Augusto, MELIOR TRAJANO. Eutrop. viii. 5.

[38] Dion (l. lxix. [c. 1] p. 1149) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who, being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the lifetime of Trajan.

vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus.[39]

Adoption of the elder and younger Verus.

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous.[40] But whilst Hadrian was delighting himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by an immense donative, the new Cæsar[41] was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the accession of Marcus, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he possessed one virtue—a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil over his memory.

Adoption of the two Antonines.

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the thanks of posterity by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman throne. His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about fifty years of age, blameless in all the offices of life; and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened the fair prospect of every virtue: the elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself should immediately adopt the younger.

A.D. 138–180.

The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now speaking) governed the Roman world forty-two years with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had

[39] Dion (l. lxx. [c. 1] p. 1172). Aurel. Victor. [§ 13.]

[40] The deification of Antinous, his medals, statues, temples, city, oracles, and constellation, are well known, and still dishonour the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that, of the first fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, see Spanheim, Commentaire sur les Cæsars de Julien, p. 80.

[41] Hist. August. p. 13. [Spartian. Æ. Verus, c. 1.] Aurelius Victor in Epitom. [§ 9.]

two sons,[42] he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family, gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance of jealousy, associated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his sovereign,[43] and, after he was no more, regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

Character and reign of Pius.

Titus Antoninus Pius has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life he was an amiable as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his fortune and the innocent pleasures of society;[44] and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

Of Marcus.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind.[45] It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and

[42] Without the help of medals and inscriptions we should be ignorant of this fact, so honourable to the memory of Pius.[a]

[43] During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25. [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 7.]

[44] He was fond of the theatre, and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hist. August. p. 20, 21. [Capitol. Ant. Pius, c. 8 and 11.] Julian in Cæsar.

[45] The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy, and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius and even Verus (Hist. August. p. 34 [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 29]). This suspicion, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social

[a] Gibbon attributes to Antoninus Pius a merit which he either did not possess, or was not in a situation to display. 1. He was adopted only on the condition that he would adopt in his turn Marcus Aurelius and L. Verus. 2. His two sons died children, and one of them, M. Galerius, alone, appears to have survived, for a few years, his father's coronation. Gibbon is also mistaken when he says (note 42) that "without the help of medals and inscriptions we should be ignorant that Antoninus had two sons." Capitolinus says expressly (c. 1), Filii mares duo, duæ feminæ: we only owe their names to the medals. Pagi. Cont. Baron. i. 33, edit. Paris.—W.

many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent.[46] His Meditations, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor.[47] But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Cassius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had disappointed him, by a voluntary death,[a] of the pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he justified the sincerity of that sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor.[48] War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature;[c] but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and, above a century after his death, many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods.[49]

Happiness of the Romans.

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of

virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildest scepticism never insinuated that Cæsar might possibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice.

[46] Tacitus has characterised, in a few words, the principles of the Portico: Doctores sapientiæ secutus est, qui sola bona quæ honesta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hist. iv. 5.

[47] Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. Hist. August. p. 41, in Cassio, c. 3.

[48] Dion, l. lxxi. [c. 23, *sqq.*] p. 1190. Hist. August. [p. 43] in Avid. Cassio [c. 8].[b]

[49] Hist. August. [Capitol.] in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

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[a] Cassius was murdered by his own partisans. Vulcat. Gallic. in Cassio, c. 7. Dion, lxxi. c. 27.—W.

[b] See one of the newly discovered passages of Dion Cassius. Marcus wrote to the senate, who urged the execution of the partisans of Cassius, in these words: "I entreat and beseech you to preserve my reign unstained by senatorial blood. None of your order must perish either by your desire or mine." Mai. Fragm. Vatican. ii. p. 224.—M.

[c] Marcus would not accept the services of any of the barbarian allies who crowded to his standard in the war against Avidius Cassius. "Barbarians," he said, with wise but vain sagacity, "must not become acquainted with the dissensions of the Roman people." Mai. Fragm. Vatican. ii. 224.—M

Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom. A.D. 96-180.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense revenue that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power which they had exerted for the benefit, of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters. Its precarious nature.

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius,[50] and the timid Memory of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

[50] Vitellius consumed in mere eating at least six millions of our money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog, but it is by substituting for a coarse word a very fine image. "At Vitellius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut *ignava animalia*, quibus si cibum suggeras, jacent torpentque, præterita, instantia, futura, pari oblivione dimiserat. Atque illum nemore Aricino desidem et marcentem," &c. Tacit. Hist. iii. 36, ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion Cassius, l. lxv. [c. 3] p. 1062.

inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign [51]) Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

Peculiar misery of the Romans under their tyrants.

Under the reign of these monsters the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers; and 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

Insensibility of the Orientals.

I. When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed with the blood of their favourites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, That he never departed from the sultan's presence without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders. The experience of every day might almost justify the scepticism of Rustan.[52] Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the slumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the dust; but the stroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wise man to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's slave; had, perhaps, been purchased from obscure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the seraglio.[53] His name, his wealth, his honours, were the gift of a master, who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed. Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the East informed him that such had ever been the condition of mankind.[54] The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, incul-

[51] The execution of Helvidius Priscus, and of the virtuous Eponina, disgraced the reign of Vespasian.

[52] Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. iii. p. 293.

[53] The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the East.

[54] Chardin says that European travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.

cated to him that the sultan was the descendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a Mussulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

Knowledge and free spirit of the Romans.

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their free-born ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus; and inwardly to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators they were admitted into the great council which had once dictated laws to the earth, whose name still gave a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honours.[55] The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate,[56] whose clemency they most applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty.[57] The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their

[55] They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66). Marcellus Epirus and Crispus Vibius had acquired two millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. See Tacit. Hist. iv. 43, Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the just object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ornaments, and a present of sixty thousand pounds.

[56] The crime of *majesty* was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.[a]

[57] After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. She had not been publicly strangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniæ, where those of common malefactors were exposed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 53.

[a] It was Tiberius, not Augustus, who læsæ majestatis. Bachii Trajanus, 27 first took in this sense the words crimen —W.

secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

Extent of their empire left them no place of refuge.

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and, when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair.[58] To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive.[59] "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember "that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."[60]

[58] Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Ægean Sea, the inhabitants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known by his just but unmanly lamentations. It should seem, that he only received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and gaolers were unnecessary.

[59] Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example, that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14.

[60] Cicero ad Familiares, iv. 7.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRUELTY, FOLLIES, AND MURDER OF COMMODUS — ELECTION OF PERTINAX — HIS ATTEMPTS TO REFORM THE STATE — HIS ASSASSINATION BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS.

THE mildness of Marcus, which the rigid discipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the same time, the most amiable, and the only defective, part of his character. His excellent understanding was often deceived by the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. Artful men, who study the passions of princes and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of philosophic sanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to despise them.[1] His excessive indulgence to his brother,[a] his wife, and his son, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury by the example and consequences of their vices. Indulgence of Marcus

Faustina, the daughter of Pius and the wife of Marcus, has been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave simplicity of the philosopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded passion for variety which often discovered personal merit in the meanest of mankind.[2] The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very sensual deity; and the amours of an empress, as they exact on her side the plainest advances, are seldom susceptible of much sentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who seemed ignorant or insensible of the irregularities of Faustina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted several of her lovers to posts of honour and profit,[3] and, during a connexion of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the most tender confidence, and of a respect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations he thanks the gods, who had to his wife Faustina;

[1] See the complaints of Avidius Cassius, Hist. August. p. 45. [Vulcat. Gallic. Avid. Cassius, c. 14.] These are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

[2] Faustinam satis constat apud Cajetam *conditiones* sibi et nauticas et gladiatorias, elegisse. Hist. August. p. 30. [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 19.] Lampridius explains the sort of merit which Faustina chose, and the *conditions* which she exacted. Hist. August. p. 102.

[3] Hist. August. p. 34. [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 29.]

[a] His brother by adoption, and his colleague, L. Verus. Marcus Aurelius had no other brother.— W.

bestowed on him a wife so faithful, so gentle, and of such a wonderful simplicity of manners.[4] The obsequious senate, at his earnest request, declared her a goddess. She was represented in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either sex should pay their vows before the altar of their chaste patroness.[5]

The monstrous vices of the son have cast a shade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy; and that he chose a successor in his own family rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to render him worthy of the throne for which he was designed. But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this laboured education, by admitting his son, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards: but he lived long enough to repent a rash measure, which raised the impetuous youth above the restraint of reason and authority.

to his son Commodus.

Most of the crimes which disturb the internal peace of society are produced by the restraints which the necessary, but unequal, laws of property have imposed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the possession of those objects that are coveted by many. Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord the laws of society lose their force, and their place is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of pity. From such motives almost every page of history has been stained with civil blood; but these motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing

Accession of the emperor Commodus.

[4] Meditat. i. 1. [§ 17.] The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madam Dacier assures us (and we may credit a lady) that the husband will always be deceived, if the wife condescends to dissemble.

[5] Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. [c. 31] p. 1195. Hist. August. p. 33. [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 26.] Commentaire de Spanheim sur les Cesars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Faustina is the only defect which Julian's criticism is able to discover in the all-accomplished character of Marcus.

to wish, and everything to enjoy. The beloved son of Marcus succeeded to his father, amidst the acclamations of the senate and armies;[6] and when he ascended the throne, the happy youth saw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to punish. In this calm elevated station it was surely natural that he should prefer the love of mankind to their detestation, the mild glories of his five predecessors to the ignominious fate of Nero and Domitian. A.D. 180.

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiate thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions.[7] Nature had formed him of a weak, rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul.[8] Character of Commodus.

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himself embarrassed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war against the Quadi and Marcomanni.[9] The servile and profligate youths whom Marcus had banished soon regained their station and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardships and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they assured the indolent prince that the terror of his name and the arms of his lieutenants would be sufficient to complete the conquest of the dismayed barbarians, or to impose such conditions as were more advantageous than any conquest. By a dexterous application to his sensual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the splendour, the refined pleasures of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leisure nor materials for luxury.[10] Commodus listened to the pleasing advice; but whilst he hesitated between his own inclination and the awe which he still retained for his father's counsellors, the summer insensibly elapsed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful person,[11] popular address, and imagined virtues, attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he He returns to Rome.

[6] Commodus was the first *Porphyrogenitus* (born since his father's accession to the throne). By a new strain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life; as if they were synonymous to those of his reign. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. ii. p. 752.

[7] Hist. August. p. 46. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 1.]

[8] Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. [c. 1] p. 1203.

[9] According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25), he died at Sirmium. But the situation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi.

[10] Herodian, l. i. [c. 6] p. 12.

[11] Herodian, l. i. [c. 7] p. 16.

had recently granted to the barbarians diffused an universal joy;[12] his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit, of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the licence of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood; and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue.[13] A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

Is wounded by an assassin. A.D. 183.

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre,[14] an assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, "*The senate sends you this.*" The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed, not in the state, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank, and jealous of the reigning empress, had armed the murderer against her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black design to her second husband, Claudius Pompeianus, a senator of distinguished merit and unshaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for she imitated the manners of Faustina) she found men of desperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to serve her more violent, as well as her tender passions. The conspirators experienced the rigour of justice, and the abandoned princess was punished, first with exile, and afterwards with death.[15]

Hatred and cruelty of Commodus towards the senate.

But the words of the assassin sunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of fear and hatred against the whole body of the senate.[a] Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected

[12] This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 193.

[13] Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had lain concealed several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. [c. 7] p. 1209.

[14] See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126.

[15] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 4] p. 1205. Herodian, l. i. [c. 8] p. 16. Hist. August. p. 46. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 4.]

[a] The conspirators were senators, even the assassin himself. Herod. i. [c. 8] 81.—G.

as secret enemies. The Delators, a race of men discouraged, and almost extinguished, under the former reigns, again became formidable as soon as they discovered that the emperor was desirous of finding disaffection and treason in the senate. That assembly, whom Marcus had ever considered as the great council of the nation, was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal. The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit censure of the irregularities of Commodus; important services implied a dangerous superiority of merit; and the friendship of the father always insured the aversion of the son. Suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse.

Of these innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus, whose fraternal love has saved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to posterity. Their studies and their occupations, their pursuits and their pleasures, were still the same. In the enjoyment of a great estate, they never admitted the idea of a separate interest: some fragments are now extant of a treatise which they composed in common;[a] and in every action of life it was observed that their two bodies were animated by one soul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues, and delighted in their union, raised them in the same year to the consulship; and Marcus afterwards intrusted to their joint care the civil administration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a signal victory over the Germans. The kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death.[16] The Quintilian brothers.

The tyrant's rage, after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. Whilst Commodus was immersed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis; a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The Prætorian guards were under his immediate com- The minister Perennis.

[16] In a note upon the Augustan History, Casaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning these celebrated brothers. See p. 94 of his learned commentary.

[a] This work was on agriculture, and is often quoted by later writers. See P. Needham, Proleg. ad Geoponic. Camb. 1704.—W.

mand; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, surprised, and put to death. The fall of a minister is a very trifling incident in the general history of the empire; but it was hastened by an extraordinary circumstance, which proved how much the nerves of discipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, discontented with the administration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred select men, with instructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. These military petitioners, by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the divisions of the guards, by exaggerating the strength of the British army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the minister's death, as the only redress of their grievances.[17] This presumption of a distant army, and their discovery of the weakness of government, was a sure presage of the most dreadful convulsions.

A.D. 185.

The negligence of the public administration was betrayed soon afterwards by a new disorder, which arose from the smallest beginnings. A spirit of desertion began to prevail among the troops, and the deserters, instead of seeking their safety in flight or concealment, infested the highways. Maternus, a private soldier, of a daring boldness above his station, collected these bands of robbers into a little army, set open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceless cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long

Revolt of Maternus.

[17] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 9] p. 1210. Herodian, l. i. [c. 9] p. 22. Hist. August. p. 48. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 6,] Dion gives a much less odious character of Perennis than the other historians. His moderation is almost a pledge of his veracity.[a]

[a] Gibbon praises Dion for the moderation with which he speaks of Perennis: he follows, nevertheless, in his own narrative, Herodian and Lampridius. Dion speaks of Perennis not only with moderation, but with admiration: he represents him as a great man, virtuous in his life, and blameless in his death: perhaps he may be suspected of partiality; but it is singular that Gibbon, having adopted from Herodian and Lampridius their judgment on this minister, follows Dion's unpraisable account of his death. What likelihood, in fact, that fifteen hundred men should have traversed Gaul and Italy, and have arrived at Rome, without any understanding with the Prætorians, or without detection or opposition from Perennis, the Prætorian præfect? Gibbon, foreseeing, perhaps, this difficulty, has added that the military deputation inflamed the divisions of the guards; but Dion says expressly that they did not reach Rome, but that the emperor went out to meet them: he even reproaches him for not having opposed them with the guards, who were superior in number. Herodian relates that Commodus, having learnt from a soldier the ambitious designs of Perennis and his son, caused them to be attacked and massacred by night. —G. from W. Dion's narrative is remarkably circumstantial, and his authority higher than either of the other writers. He hints that Cleander, a new favourite, had already undermined the influence of Perennis.—M.

been the spectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were at length roused from their supine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompassed, and foresaw that he must be overpowered. A great effort of despair was his last resource. He ordered his followers to disperse, to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele.[18] To murder Commodus, and to ascend the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered and ruined this singular enterprise in the moment when it was ripe for execution.[19]

The minister Cleander.

Suspicious princes often promote the last of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence, except on their favour, will have no attachment except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation over whose stubborn but servile temper blows only could prevail.[20] He had been sent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the imperial palace, rendered himself useful to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of any ability or virtue which could inspire the emperor with envy or distrust. Avarice was the reigning passion of his soul, and the great principle of his administration. The rank of consul, of patrician, of senator, was exposed to public sale; and it would have been considered as disaffection if any one had refused to purchase these empty and disgraceful honours with the greatest part of his fortune.[21] In the lucrative provincial employments the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned, but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge.

His avarice and cruelty.

By these means Cleander, in the space of three years, had accumu-

[18] During the second Punic war the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the *Megalesia*, began on the fourth of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid. de Fastis, l. iv. 189, &c.

[19] Herodian, l. i. [c. 10] p. 23, 28.

[20] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27.

[21] One of these dear-bought promotions occasioned a current bon mot, that Julius Solon was *banished* into the senate.

lated more wealth than had ever yet been possessed by any freedman.[22] Commodus was perfectly satisfied with the magnificent presents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the most seasonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exercise, for the use of the people.[23] He flattered himself that the Romans, dazzled and amused by this apparent liberality, would be less affected by the bloody scenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a senator to whose superior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters; and that they would forgive the execution of Arrius Antoninus, the last representative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to disclose to his brother-in-law the true character of Cleander. An equitable sentence pronounced by the latter, when proconsul of Asia, against a worthless creature of the favourite, proved fatal to him.[24] After the fall of Perennis the terrors of Commodus had, for a short time, assumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the most odious of his acts, loaded his memory with the public execration, and ascribed to the pernicious counsels of that wicked minister all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance lasted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the administration of Perennis was often regretted.

Sedition; and death of Cleander, A.D. 189.

Pestilence and famine contributed to fill up the measure of the calamities of Rome.[25] The first could be only imputed to the just indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by the riches and power of the minister, was considered as the immediate cause of the second. The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amusements for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the Prætorian guards,[26] ordered a body

[22] Dion (l. lxxii. c. 12, 13) observes that no freedman had possessed riches equal to those of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five-and-twenty hundred thousand pounds—*ter millies*.

[23] Dion, l. lxxii. c. 12, 13. Herodian, l. i. [c. 12] p. 29. Hist. August. p. 52. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 17.] These baths were situated near the *Porta Capena*. See Nardini, Roma Antica, p. 79.

[24] Hist. August. p. 48. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 7.]

[25] Herodian, l. i. [c. 12, init.] p. 28. Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 14] p. 1215. The latter says that two thousand persons died every day at Rome during a considerable length of time.

[26] Tuncque primum tres præfecti prætorio fuere: inter quos libertinus. [Lamprid. Comm. 6.] From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he

of cavalry to sally forth and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death; but when the cavalry entered the streets their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot-guards,[27] who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the Prætorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The Prætorians at length gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury returned with redoubled violence against the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay dissolved in luxury, and alone unconscious of the civil war. It was death to approach his person with the unwelcome news. He would have perished in this supine security, had not two women, his eldest sister Fadilla, and Marcia the most favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his presence. Bathed in tears, and with dishevelled hair, they threw themselves at his feet, and, with all the pressing eloquence of fear, discovered to the affrighted emperor the crimes of the minister, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin which in a few minutes would burst over his palace and person. Commodus started from his dream of pleasure, and commanded that the head of Cleander should be thrown out to the people. The desired spectacle instantly appeased the tumult; and the son of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his subjects.[28]

But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilst he thus abandoned the reins of empire to these unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in sovereign power except the unbounded licence of indulging his sensual appetites. His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys, of every rank and of every province; and, wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the

Dissolute pleasures of Commodus.

assumed the powers of Prætorian præfect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, *a rationibus*, *ab epistolis*, Cleander, called himself *a pugione*, as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage.[a]

[27] Οἱ τῆς πόλεως στίζοι στρατιῶται. Herodian, l. i. [c. 12, *fin.*] p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the Prætorian infantry, or the cohortes urbanæ, a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton choose to decide this question.[b]

[28] Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. [c. 13] p. 1214. Herodian, l. i. [c. 13] p. 32. Hist. August. p. 48. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 5.]

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[a] M. Guizot denies that Lampridius means Cleander as præfect a pugione. The Libertinus seems to me to mean him. —M.

[b] It seems to me there is none. The passage of Herodian is clear, and designates the city cohorts. Compare Dion, p. 797 [l. lv. c. 24]. —W.

brutal lover had recourse to violence. The ancient historians[29] have expatiated on these abandoned scenes of prostitution, which scorned every restraint of nature or modesty; but it would not be easy to translate their too faithful descriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals of lust were filled up with the basest amusements. The influence of a polite age and the labour of an attentive education had never been able to infuse into his rude and brutish mind the least tincture of learning; and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of the understanding. Nero himself excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of music and poetry; nor should we despise his pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relaxation of a leisure hour into the serious business and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amusements of the populace—the sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. The masters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his son, were heard with inattention and disgust; whilst the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to shoot with the bow, found a disciple who delighted in his application, and soon equalled the most skilful of his instructors in the steadiness of the eye and the dexterity of the hand.

His ignorance and low stories.

The servile crowd, whose fortune depended on their master's vices, applauded these ignoble pursuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him that, by exploits of the same nature, by the defeat of the Nemæan lion, and the slaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to observe that, in the first ages of society, when the fiercer animals often dispute with man the possession of an unsettled country, a successful war against those savages is one of the most innocent and beneficial labours of heroism. In the civilised state of the Roman empire the wild beasts had long since retired from the face of man and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To surprise them in their solitary haunts, and to transport them to Rome, that they might be slain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterprise equally ridiculous for the prince and oppressive for the people.[30] Ignorant

Hunting of wild beasts.

[29] Sororibus suis constupratis. Ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamia, omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus. Hist. Aug. p. 47. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 5.]

[30] The African lions, when pressed by hunger, infested the open villages and cultivated country; and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital; and the unfortunate peasant

of these distinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we still read on his medals[31]) the *Roman Hercules*.[a] The club and the lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character and with the attributes of the god whose valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements.[32]

Commodus displays his skill in the amphitheatre.

Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit before the eyes of the Roman people those exercises which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace and to the presence of a few favourites. On the appointed day the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of spectators; and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed on the uncommon skill of the imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows, whose point was shaped into the form of a crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career and cut asunder the long bony neck of the ostrich.[33] A panther was let loose; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropped dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheatre disgorged at once a hundred lions: a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the *Arena*. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant nor the scaly hide of the rhinoceros could defend them from his stroke. Æthiopia and India yielded their most extraordinary productions; and several animals were slain in the amphitheatre which had been seen only in the representations of art, or perhaps of fancy.[34] In all

who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary *game-law* was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Justinian. Codex Theodos. tom. v. p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred.

[31] Spanheim de Numismat. Dissertat. xii. tom. ii. p. 493.

[32] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 15] p. 1216. Hist. August. p. 49. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 8, 9.]

[33] The ostrich's neck is three feet long, and composed of seventeen vertebræ. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle.

[34] Commodus killed a camelopardalis or giraffe (Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 10] p. 1211), the tallest, the most gentle, and the most useless of the large quadrupeds. This singular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been seen in Europe

[a] Commodus placed his own head on the colossal statue of Hercules, with the inscription "Lucius Commodus Hercules." The wits of Rome, according to a new fragment of Dion, published the following epigram, of which, like many other ancient jests, the point is not very clear. "Διὸς παῖς Καλλίνικος Ἡρακλῆς, οὐκ εἰμὶ Λεύκιος, ἄλλ' ἀναγκάζουσί με." It seems to be a protest of the god against being confounded with the emperor. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. ii. 225.—M.

these exhibitions the securest precautions were used to protect the person of the Roman Hercules from the desperate spring of any savage who might possibly disregard the dignity of the emperor and the sanctity of the god.[35]

Acts as a gladiator.

But the meanest of the populace were affected with shame and indignation when they beheld their sovereign enter the lists as a gladiator, and glory in a profession which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the justest note of infamy.[36] He chose the habit and arms of the *Secutor*, whose combat with the *Retiarius* formed one of the most lively scenes in the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. The *Secutor* was armed with an helmet, sword, and buckler; his naked antagonist had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle, with the other to despatch, his enemy. If he missed the first throw he was obliged to fly from the pursuit of the *Secutor* till he had prepared his net for a second cast.[37] The emperor fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-five several times. These glorious achievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and that he might omit no circumstance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators a stipend so exorbitant that it became a new and most ignominious tax upon the Roman people.[38] It may be easily supposed that in these engagements the master of the world was always successful: in the amphitheatre his victories were not often sanguinary; but when he exercised his skill in the school of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagonists were frequently honoured with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to seal their

since the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hist. Naturelle, tom. xiii.) has endeavoured to describe, he has not ventured to delineate, the giraffe.[a]

[35] Herodian, l. i. [c. 15] p. 37. Hist. August. p. 50. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 12.]

[36] The virtuous and even the wise princes forbade the senators and knights to embrace this scandalous profession, under pain of infamy, or, what was more dreaded by those profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to dishonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced, in the arena, forty senators and sixty knights. See Lipsius, Saturnalia, l. ii. c. 2. He has happily corrected a passage of Suetonius in Nerone, c. 12.

[37] Lipsius, l. ii. c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth satire [v. 200, *sqq.*], gives a picturesque description of this combat.

[38] Hist. August. p. 50. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 11.] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 19] p. 1220. He received, for each time, *decies*, about 8000*l.* sterling.

[a] The naturalists of our days have been more fortunate. London probably now contains more specimens of this animal than have been seen in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire, unless in the pleasure gardens of the emperor Frederic II. in Sicily, which possessed several. Frederic's collections of wild beasts were exhibited for the popular amusement in many parts of Italy. Raumer, Geschichte der Hohenstaufen, v. iii. p. 571. Gibbon, moreover, is mistaken, as a giraffe was presented to Lorenzo de' Medici, either by the sultan of Egypt, or the king of Tunis. Contemporary authorities are quoted in the old work, Gesner de Quadrupedibus, p. 162.—M.

flattery with their blood.[39] He now disdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated Secutor, was the only one which delighted his ear. It was inscribed on his colossal statues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations[40] of the mournful and applauding senate.[41] Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous husband of Lucilla, was the only senator who asserted the honour of his rank. As a father he permitted his sons to consult their safety by attending the amphitheatre. As a Roman he declared that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the son of Marcus prostituting his person and dignity. Notwithstanding his manly resolution, Pompeianus escaped the resentment of the tyrant, and, with his honour, had the good fortune to preserve his life.[42] His infamy and extravagance.

Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy. Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise from himself that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures.[43] His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics. Marcia, his favourite concubine, Eclectus, his chamberlain, and Lætus, his Prætorian præfect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant,[a] or the sudden indignation of the Conspiracy of his domestics.

[39] Victor [§ 4] tells us that Commodus only allowed his antagonists a leaden weapon, dreading most probably the consequences of their despair.

[40] They were obliged to repeat six hundred and twenty-six times, *Paulus, first of the Secutors*, &c.

[41] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 20] p. 1221. He speaks of his own baseness and danger.

[42] He mixed however some prudence with his courage, and passed the greatest part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age and the weakness of his eyes. "I never saw him in the senate," says Dion, "except during the short reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had suddenly left him, and they returned as suddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 3] p. 1227.

[43] The præfects were changed almost hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his most favoured chamberlains. Hist. August. p. 46, 51. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 3 and 15.]

[a] Commodus had already resolved to massacre them the following night; they determined to anticipate his design. Herod. i. 17.—W.

people. Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but whilst he was labouring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber, and strangled him without resistance. The body was secretly conveyed out of the palace, before the least suspicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the son of Marcus, and so easy was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppressed, during thirteen years, so many millions of subjects, each of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and personal abilities.[44]

Death of Commodus. A.D. 192, Dec. 31.

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity which the greatness of the occasion required. They resolved instantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whose character would justify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, præfect of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honours of the state. He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct.[45] He now remained almost alone of the friends and ministers of Marcus; and when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news that the chamberlain and the præfect were at his door, he received them with intrepid resignation, and desired they would execute their master's orders. Instead of death they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During some moments he distrusted their intentions and assurances. Convinced at length

Choice of Pertinax for emperor.

[44] Dion, l. lxxii. [c. 22] p. 1223. Herodian, l. i. [c. 17] p. 43. Hist. August. p. 52. [Lamprid. Comm. c. 17.]

[45] Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and son of a timber-merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deserves to be set down, as expressive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Præfect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *Ala*, or squadron of horse, in Mæsia. 4. He was commissary of provisions on the Æmilian Way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a salary of about 1600*l.* a year. 7. He commanded the veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of senator. 9. Of prætor. 10. With the command of the first legion in Rhætia and Noricum. 11. He was consul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the East. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was consular legate of Mæsia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public provisions at Rome. 19. He was proconsul of Africa. 20. Præfect of the city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48) does justice to his disinterested spirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him with a great fortune acquired by bribery and corruption.

of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the supreme rank.[46]

Lætus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Prætorians, diffusing at the same time through the city a seasonable report that Commodus died suddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* succeeded to the throne. The guards were rather surprised than pleased with the suspicious death of a prince whose indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced: but the emergency of the occasion, the authority of their præfect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the people, obliged them to stifle their secret discontents, to accept the donative promised by the new emperor, to swear allegiance to him, and, with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands, to conduct him to the senate-house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil authority. He is acknowledged by the Prætorian guards;

This important night was now far spent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the senators expected a summons to attend an ignominious ceremony.[a] In spite of all remonstrances, even of those of his creatures who yet preserved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the night in the gladiators' school, and from thence to take possession of the consulship, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor. For a few minutes they sat in silent suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus: but when at length they were assured that the tyrant was no more, they resigned themselves to all the transports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modestly represented the meanness of his extraction, and pointed out several noble senators more deserving than himself of the empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence to ascend the throne, and received all the titles of Imperial power, confirmed by the most sincere vows of fidelity. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, resounded in every corner of the house. They decreed, in and by the senate, A.D. 193, January 1.

The memory of Commodus declared infamous.

[46] Julian, in the Cæsars, taxes him with being accessory to the death of Commodus.

[a] The senate always assembled at the beginning of the year, on the night of the 1st January (see Savaron on Sid. Apoll. viii. 6), and this happened the present year as usual, without any particular order.—G. from W.

tumultuous votes,[a] that his honours should be reversed, his titles erased from the public monuments, his statues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the stripping-room of the gladiators, to satiate the public fury; and they expressed some indignation against those officious servants who had already presumed to screen his remains from the justice of the senate. But Pertinax could not refuse those last rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his first protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented still more that he had deserved it.[47]

Legal jurisdiction of the senate over the emperors.

These effusions of impotent rage against a dead emperor, whom the senate had flattered when alive with the most abject servility, betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge. The legality of these decrees was however supported by the principles of the Imperial constitution. To censure, to depose, or to punish with death, the first magistrate of the republic who had abused his delegated trust, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman senate;[48] but that feeble assembly was obliged to content itself with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public justice from which, during his life and reign, he had been shielded by the strong arm of military despotism.[b]

Virtues of Pertinax.

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predecessor's memory—by the contrast of his own virtues with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his accession he resigned

[47] Capitolinus [Lampridius] gives us the particulars of these tumultuary votes, which were moved by one senator, and repeated, or rather chanted, by the whole body. Hist. August. p. 52. [Lamprid. Commod. c. 18, *seq.*]

[48] The senate condemned Nero to be put to death *more majorum.* Sueton. c. 49.

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[a] What Gibbon improperly calls, both here and in the note, tumultuous decrees, were no more than the applauses and acclamations which recur so often in the history of the emperors. The custom passed from the theatre to the forum, from the forum to the senate. Applauses on the adoption of the Imperial decrees were first introduced under Trajan. (Plin. jun. Panegyr. 75.) One senator read the form of the decree, and all the rest answered by acclamations accompanied with a kind of chant or rhythm. These were some of the acclamations addressed to Pertinax and against the memory of Commodus. Hosti patriæ honores detrahantur. Parricidæ honores detrahantur. Ut salvi simus, Jupiter, optime, maxime, serva nobis Pertinacem. This custom prevailed not only in the councils of state, but in all the meetings of the senate. However inconsistent it may appear with the solemnity of a religious assembly, the early Christians adopted and introduced it into their synods, notwithstanding the opposition of some of the Fathers, particularly of St. Chrysostom. See the Coll. of Franc. Bern. Ferrarius de veterum acclamatione in Grævii Thesaur. Antiq. Rom. i. 6. —W.

This note is rather hypercritical as regards Gibbon, but appears to me worthy of preservation.—M.

[b] No particular law assigned this right to the senate: it was deduced from the ancient principles of the republic. Gibbon appears to infer from the passage of Suetonius, that the senate, according to its ancient right, punished Nero with death. The words, however, *more majorum,* refer not to the decree of the senate, but to the kind of death, which was taken from an old law of Romulus. See Victor Epit. ed. Artzen. p. 484, n. 7.—W.

over to his wife and son his whole private fortune; that they might have no pretence to solicit favours at the expense of the state. He refused to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Augusta, or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Cæsar. Accurately distinguishing between the duties of a parent and those of a sovereign, he educated his son with a severe simplicity, which, while it gave him no assured prospect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public the behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the senate (and, in a private station, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual), without either pride or jealousy; considered them as friends and companions, with whom he had shared the dangers of the tyranny, and with whom he wished to enjoy the security of the present time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by those who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus.[49]

He endeavours to reform the state.

To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleasing, but melancholy, task of Pertinax. The innocent victims who yet survived were recalled from exile, released from prison, and restored to the full possession of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered senators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itself beyond death) were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors; their memory was justified; and every consolation was bestowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among these consolations, one of the most grateful was the punishment of the Delators, the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquisition of these legal assassins, Pertinax proceeded with a steady temper, which gave everything to justice, and nothing to popular prejudice and resentment.

His regulations,

The finances of the state demanded the most vigilant care of the emperor. Though every measure of injustice and extortion had been adopted which could collect the property of the subject into the coffers of the prince, the rapaciousness of Commodus had been so very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than eight thousand pounds were found in the exhausted treasury,[50] to defray the current expenses of government, and to discharge the pressing demand of a liberal donative which the

[49] Dion (l. lxxiii. [c. 3] p. 1228) speaks of these entertainments as a senator who had supped with the emperor; Capitolinus (Hist. August. p. 58) [Capitol. Pertin. c. 12], like a slave who had received his intelligence from one of the scullions.

[50] *Decies.* The blameless economy of Pius left his successors a treasure of *vicies septies millies*, above two-and-twenty millions sterling. Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 8] p. 1231.

new emperor had been obliged to promise to the Prætorian guards. Yet under these distressed circumstances, Pertinax had the generous firmness to remit all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjust claims of the treasury; declaring, in a decree of the senate, "that he was better satisfied to administer a "poor republic with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways "of tyranny and dishonour." Economy and industry he considered as the pure and genuine sources of wealth; and from them he soon derived a copious supply for the public necessities. The expense of the household was immediately reduced to one-half. All the instruments of luxury Pertinax exposed to public auction,[51] gold and silver plate, chariots of a singular construction, a superfluous wardrobe of silk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful slaves of both sexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, those who were born in a state of freedom, and had been ravished from the arms of their weeping parents. At the same time that he obliged the worthless favourites of the tyrant to resign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he satisfied the just creditors of the state, and unexpectedly discharged the long arrears of honest services. He removed the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces to those who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute during the term of ten years.[52]

and popularity.

Such an uniform conduct had already secured to Pertinax the noblest reward of a sovereign, the love and esteem of his people. Those who remembered the virtues of Marcus were happy to contemplate in their new emperor the features of that bright original, and flattered themselves that they should long enjoy the benign influence of his administration. A hasty zeal to reform the corrupted state, accompanied with less prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himself and to his country. His honest indiscretion united against him the servile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public disorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws.[53]

Amidst the general joy the sullen and angry countenance of the Prætorian guards betrayed their inward dissatisfaction. They had

[51] Besides the design of converting these useless ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiii. [c. 5] p. 1229) assigns two secret motives of Pertinax. He wished to expose the vices of Commodus, and to discover by the purchasers those who most resembled him.

[52] Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct. [Capitol. Pertin. c. 13.]

[53] Leges, rem surdam, inexorabilem esse. T. Liv. ii. 3.

reluctantly submitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the strictness of the ancient discipline, which he was preparing to restore; and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their discontents were secretly fomented by Lætus, their præfect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a servant, but would not be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign the soldiers seized on a noble senator, with a design to carry him to the camp, and to invest him with the imperial purple. Instead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the affrighted victim escaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A short time afterwards Sosius Falco, one of the consuls of the year, a rash youth,[54] but of an ancient and opulent family, listened to the voice of ambition; and a conspiracy was formed during a short absence of Pertinax, which was crushed by his sudden return to Rome and his resolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being justly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been saved by the earnest and sincere entreaties of the injured emperor; who conjured the senate that the purity of his reign might not be stained by the blood even of a guilty senator.

Discontent of the Prætorians.

A conspiracy prevented.

These disappointments served only to irritate the rage of the Prætorian guards. On the twenty-eighth of March, eighty-six days only after the death of Commodus, a general sedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to suppress. Two or three hundred of the most desperate soldiers marched at noon-day, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the Imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions upon guard; and by the domestics of the old court, who had already formed a secret conspiracy against the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, disdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his assassins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the sanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they stood in silent suspense, ashamed of their atrocious design, and awed by the venerable aspect and majestic firmness of their sovereign, till at length, the despair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres[55]

Murder of Pertinax by the Prætorians, A.D. 193, March 28.

[54] If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult), Falco behaved with the most petulant indecency to Pertinax on the day of his accession. The wise emperor only admonished him of his youth and inexperience. Hist. August. p. 55. [Capitol. Pertin. c. 5.]

[55] The modern bishopric of Liege. This soldier probably belonged to the Batavian horse-guards, who were mostly raised in the duchy of Gueldres and the neighbourhood, and were distinguished by their valour, and by the boldness with which they swam their horses across the broadest and most rapid rivers. Tacit. Hist. iv. 12. Dion, l. lv. [c. 24] p. 797. Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4.

levelled the first blow against Pertinax, who was instantly despatched with a multitude of wounds. His head, separated from his body and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the Prætorian camp, in the sight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the transient blessings of a reign, the memory of which could serve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes.[56]

[56] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 9, 10] p. 1232. Herodian, l. ii. [c. 5, *fin.*] p. 60. Hist. August. p. 58. [Capitol. Pertin. c. 11.] Victor in Epitom. et in Cæsarib. Eutropius, viii. 16.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC SALE OF THE EMPIRE TO DIDIUS JULIANUS BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS — CLODIUS ALBINUS IN BRITAIN, PESCENNIUS NIGER IN SYRIA, AND SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS IN PANNONIA, DECLARE AGAINST THE MURDERERS OF PERTINAX — CIVIL WARS AND VICTORY OF SEVERUS OVER HIS THREE RIVALS — RELAXATION OF DISCIPLINE — NEW MAXIMS OF GOVERNMENT.

THE power of the sword is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy than in a small community. It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the rest of the society will vary according to the degree of its positive strength. The advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. With a handful of men, such an union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy host it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike destroyed by the extreme minuteness or the excessive weight of its springs. To illustrate this observation we need only reflect that there is no superiority of natural strength, artificial weapons, or acquired skill, which could enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant of a single town, or a small district, would soon discover that an hundred armed followers were a weak defence against ten thousand peasants or citizens; but an hundred thousand well-disciplined soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thousand guards will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital.

Proportion of the military force to the number of the people.

The Prætorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last-mentioned number.[1] They derived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain,

The Prætorian guards.

Their institution.

[1] They were originally nine or ten thousand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the subject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them to sixteen thousand, and, as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sunk much below that number. See Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, i. 4.

his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favoured troops by a double pay and superior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed in the capital; whilst the remainder was dispersed in the adjacent towns of Italy.[2] But after fifty years of peace and servitude, Tiberius ventured on a decisive measure, which for ever riveted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of relieving Italy from the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing a stricter discipline among the guards, he assembled them at Rome in a permanent camp,[3] which was fortified with skilful care,[4] and placed on a commanding situation.[5]

Their camp.

Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. By thus introducing the Prætorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe which distance only and mystery can preserve towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleness of an opulent city, their pride was nourished by the sense of their irresistible weight; nor was it possible to conceal from them that the person of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, the public treasure, and the seat of empire, were all in their hands. To divert the Prætorian bands from these dangerous reflections, the firmest and best-established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, since

Their strength and confidence.

[2] Sueton. in August. c. 49.

[3] Tacit. Annal. iv. 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Cassius, l. lvii. [c. 19] p. 867.

[4] In the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the Prætorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines used in the siege of the best fortified cities. Tacit. Hist. iii. 84.

[5] Close to the walls of the city, on the broad summit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini, Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antiqua, p. 46.[a]

[a] The Castra did not stand on these hills, but to the east of them, beyond the agger of Servius Tullius and between the Porta Viminalis and the Porta Collina. When Aurelian surrounded Rome with a new line of walls, the walls of the Castra formed part of the fortifications of the city; and accordingly, when Constantine disbanded the Prætorian guards, and dismantled their camp (Zosimus, ii. 17), three sides of the walls were left standing, and the side towards the city was alone pulled down. See Becker, Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, vol. i. pt. 1, p. 199.—S.

the elevation of Claudius, was exacted as a legal claim on the accession of every new emperor.[6]

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to justify by arguments the power which they asserted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the purest principles of the constitution, *their* consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of consuls, of generals, and of magistrates, however it had been recently usurped by the senate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people.[7] But where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely amongst the mixed multitude of slaves and strangers that filled the streets of Rome; a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property. The defenders of the state, selected from the flower of the Italian youth,[8] and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue, were the genuine representatives of the people, and the best entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. These assertions, however defective in reason, became unanswerable when the fierce Prætorians increased their weight by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale.[9] Their specious claims.

The Prætorians had violated the sanctity of the throne by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the præfect Lætus, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder, Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that, in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the recent blood of so near a relation and so excellent a prince. He had They offer the empire to sale.

[6] Claudius, raised by the soldiers to the empire, was the first who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, 120*l*. (Sueton. in Claud. c. 10): when Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Verus, took quiet possession of the throne, he gave *vicena*, 160*l*., to each of the guards. Hist. August. p. 25. [Capitol. M. Anton. c. 7.] (Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 8] p. 1231.) We may form some idea of the amount of these sums, by Hadrian's complaint that the promotion of a Cæsar had cost him *ter millies*, two millions and a half sterling.

[7] Cicero de Legibus, iii. 3. The first book of Livy, and the second of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, show the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.

[8] They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies (Tacit. Annal. iv. 5). The emperor Otho compliments their vanity with the flattering titles of Italiæ Alumni, Romana vere juventus. Tacit. Hist. i. 84.

[9] In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v. 48. Plutarch. in Camill. [c. 29] p. 143.

already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Prætorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts, and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction.[10]

It is purchased by Julian, A.D. 193, March 28.

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused an universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table.[11] His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the Prætorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards, and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.[a]

Julian is acknowledged by the senate.

It was now incumbent on the Prætorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed their new sovereign, whom they served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. The senate was commanded to assemble; and those who had been the distinguished friends of Pertinax, or the personal enemies of Julian, found it necessary to affect a more than common share of satisfaction

[10] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 11] p. 1234. Herodian, l. ii. [c. 6] p. 63. Hist. August. p. 60. [Spartian. Julian. c. 2.] Though the three historians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as such by the soldiers.

[11] Spartianus softens the most odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian.

[a] One of the principal causes of the preference of Julianus by the soldiers was the dexterity with which he reminded them that Sulpicianus would not fail to revenge on them the death of his son-in-law. See Dion, p. 1234, [l. lxxiii.] c. 11. Herod. ii. 6.—W.

at this happy revolution.[12] After Julian had filled the senate-house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. The obsequious assembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the several branches of the Imperial power.[13] From the senate Julian was conducted by the same military procession to take possession of the palace. The first objects that struck his eyes were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference; the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself till a very late hour with dice and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed that, after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money.[14]

Takes possession of the palace.

He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name. The nobility, whose conspicuous station and ample possessions exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected civility of the emperor with smiles of complacency and professions of duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamours and im-

The public discontent.

[12] Dion Cassius, at that time prætor, had been a personal enemy to Julian, l. lxxiii. [c. 12] p. 1235.

[13] Hist. August. p. 61. [Spartian. Julian. c. 3.] We learn from thence one curious circumstance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of Patrician families.[a]

[14] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 13] p. 1235. Hist. August. p. 61. [Spartian. l. c.] I have endeavoured to blend into one consistent story the seeming contradictions of the two writers.[b]

[a] A new fragment of Dion shows some shrewdness in the character of Julian. When the senate voted him a golden statue, he preferred one of brass as more lasting. He "had always observed," he said, "that the statues of former emperors were soon destroyed. Those of brass alone remained." The indignant historian adds that he was wrong. The virtue of sovereigns alone preserves their images: the brazen statue of Julian was broken to pieces at his death. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. p. 226.—M.

[b] The contradiction, as M. Guizot observes, is irreconcileable. He quotes both passages: in one Julianus is represented as a miser, in the other as a voluptuary. In the one he refuses to eat till the body of Pertinax has been buried, in the other he gluts himself with every luxury almost in the sight of his headless remains.—M.

precations. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and, conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire.

The armies of Britain, Syria, and Pannonia, declare against Julian.

The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whose company, or under whose command, they had so often fought and conquered. They received with surprise, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence that the Prætorians had disposed of the empire by public auction; and they sternly refused to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal at the same time to the public peace; as the generals of the respective armies, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions,[15] with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and however different in their characters, they were all soldiers of experience and capacity.

Clodius Albinus in Britain.

Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, surpassed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from some of the most illustrious names of the old republic.[16] But the branch from whence he claimed his descent was sunk into mean circumstances, and transplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a just idea of his true character. Under the philosophic cloak of austerity, he stands accused of concealing most of the vices which degrade human nature.[17] But his accusers are those venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the ashes of an unsuccessful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preserving with the son the same interest which he had acquired with the father is a proof at least that he was possessed of a very flexible disposition. The favour of a tyrant does not always suppose a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find such a man useful to his own service. It does not appear that Albinus served the son of Marcus, either as the minister of his cruelties, or even as the

[15] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 14] p. 1237.

[16] The Postumian and the Cejonian; the former of whom was raised to the consulship in the fifth year after its institution.

[17] Spartianus, in his undigested collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human composition, and bestows them on the same object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Augustan History.

associate of his pleasures. He was employed in a distant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some discontented generals, and authorising him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Cæsar.[18] The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or at least by more specious arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischiefs of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of his little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valour,[19] Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against the usurpation of Julian. The convulsions of the capital added new weight to his sentiments, or rather to his professions, of patriotism. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Augustus and Emperor; and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a similar occasion, had styled himself the Lieutenant of the senate and people.[20]

Pescennius Niger in Syria.

Personal merit alone had raised Pescennius Niger from an obscure birth and station to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which in times of civil confusion gave him a near prospect of the throne. Yet his parts seem to have been better suited to the second than to the first rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himself an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.[21] In his government Niger acquired the esteem of the soldiers and the love of the provincials. His rigid discipline fortified the valour and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilst the voluptuous Syrians were less delighted with the mild firmness of his

[18] Hist. August. p. 79, 84. [Capitol. Clod. Albin. c. 2, 13.]

[19] Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p. 54. [Capitol. Pertin. c. 3.] Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui irascebantur.

[20] Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.

[21] Hist. August. p. 76. [Spartian. Pescenn. c. 7.]

administration than with the affability of his manners and the apparent pleasure with which he attended their frequent and pompous festivals.[22] As soon as the intelligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wishes of Asia invited Niger to assume the Imperial purple and revenge his death. The legions of the eastern frontier embraced his cause; the opulent but unarmed provinces from the frontiers of Æthiopia[23] to the Hadriatic cheerfully submitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and services. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this sudden tide of fortune: he flattered himself that his accession would be undisturbed by competition and unstained by civil blood; and whilst he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to secure the means of victory. Instead of entering into an effectual negotiation with the powerful armies of the West, whose resolution might decide, or at least must balance, the mighty contest; instead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his presence was impatiently expected,[24] Niger trifled away in the luxury of Antioch those irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the decisive activity of Severus.[25]

Pannonia and Dalmatia.

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of these barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire.[26] The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and institutions of Rome. Their recent subjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture, of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been observed, to the production of great bodies and slow minds,[27] all contributed to pre-

[22] Herod. l. ii. [c. 7] p. 68. The Chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, shows the zealous attachment of his countrymen to these festivals, which at once gratified their superstition and their love of pleasure.

[23] A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Augustan History [Spartian. Pescenn. c. 12] as an ally, and, indeed, as a personal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I strongly suspect, mistaken, he has brought to light a dynasty of tributary princes totally unknown to history.

[24] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 15] p. 1238. Herod. l. ii. [c. 7, *fin.*] p. 67. A verse in every one's mouth at that time seems to express the general opinion of the three rivals: Optimus est *Niger*, [*Fuscus*, which preserves the quantity—M.,] bonus *Afer*, pessimus *Albus*. Hist. August. p. 77. [Spartian. Pescenn. c. 8.]

[25] Herodian. l. ii. [c. 8 *fin.*] p. 71.

[26] See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, ii. 119, &c., who served in the army of Tiberius.

[27] Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. ii. [c. 9] p. 74. Will the modern Austrians allow the influence?

serve some remains of their original ferocity, and, under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were still to be discerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhaustible supply of recruits to the legions stationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare against the Germans and Sarmatians, were deservedly esteemed the best troops in the service.

Septimius Severus

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual ascent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was never diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity.[28] On the first news of the murder of Pertinax he assembled his troops, painted in the most lively colours the crime, the insolence, and the weakness of the Prætorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promising every soldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchased the empire.[29] The acclamations of the army immediately saluted Severus with the names of Augustus, Pertinax, and Emperor; and he thus attained the lofty station to which he was invited by conscious merit and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his superstition or policy.[30]

declared emperor by the Pannonian legions, A.D. 193, April 13.

The new candidate for empire saw and improved the peculiar advantage of his situation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which gave an easy access into Italy; and he remembered the saying of Augustus, That a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in sight of Rome.[31] By a celerity proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, he might reasonably hope to revenge Pertinax, punish Julian, and receive the homage of the senate and people as their lawful emperor, before his competitors,

Marches into Italy.

[28] In the letter to Albinus already mentioned, Commodus accuses Severus as one of the ambitious generals who censured his conduct and wished to occupy his place. Hist. August. p. 80. [Capitol. Clod. Albin. c. 2.]

[29] Pannonia was too poor to supply such a sum. It was probably promised in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the sum, I have adopted the conjecture of Casaubon. See Hist. August. p. 65. Comment. p. 115. [Spartian. Sever. c. 5.]

[30] Herodian, l. ii. [c. 11] p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus (Hist. August. p. 65) [Sever. l. c.], or else at Sabaria, according to Victor. [Epitom. c. 19.] Mr. Hume, in supposing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the Imperial crown, and that he marched into Italy as general only, has not considered this transaction with his usual accuracy (Essay on the original contract).[a]

[31] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 111. We must reckon the march from the nearest verge of Pannonia, and extend the sight of the city as far as two hundred miles.

[a] The ruins of Carnuntum are still visible near Haimburg, between Deutsch-Altenburg and Petronell; those of Sabaria at Stein am Anger.—S.

separated from Italy by an immense tract of sea and land, were apprised of his success, or even of his election. During the whole expedition he scarcely allowed himself any moments for sleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he insinuated himself into the confidence and affection of his troops, pressed their diligence, revived their spirits, animated their hopes, and was well satisfied to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, whilst he kept in view the infinite superiority of his reward.

Advances towards Rome.

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himself prepared, to dispute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions he saw his inevitable ruin. The hasty arrival of every messenger increased his just apprehensions. He was successively informed that Severus had passed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppose his progress, had received him with the warmest professions of joy and duty; that the important place of Ravenna had surrendered without resistance, and that the Hadriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty miles of Rome; and every moment diminished the narrow span of life and empire allotted to Julian.

Distress of Julian.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at least to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the Prætorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the suburbs, and even strengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if those last intrenchments could be defended, without hope of relief, against a victorious invader. Fear and shame prevented the guards from deserting his standard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube.[32] They quitted, with a sigh, the pleasures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms whose use they had almost forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppressed. The unpractised elephants, whose uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would strike terror into the army of the north, threw their unskilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Misenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilst the senate enjoyed, with secret pleasure, the distress and weakness of the usurper.[33]

[32] This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an allusion to a real fact recorded by Dion, l. lxxi. [c. 7] p. 1181. It probably happened more than once.

[33] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 16] p. 1238. Herodian, l. ii. [c. 11] p. 81. There is no surer proof of the military skill of the Romans than their first surmounting the idle terror, and afterwards disdaining the dangerous use, of elephants in war.[a]

[a] These elephants were kept for processions, perhaps for the games. See Herod. in loc.—M.

Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He insisted that Severus should be declared a public enemy by the senate. He entreated that the Pannonian general might be associated to the empire. He sent public ambassadors of consular rank to negotiate with his rival; he despatched private assassins to take away his life. He designed that the Vestal virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance in solemn procession to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appease, the fates, by magic ceremonies and unlawful sacrifices.[34] His uncertain conduct.

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himself from the only danger of secret conspiracy by the faithful attendance of six hundred chosen men, who never quitted his person or their cuirasses, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a steady and rapid course, he passed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Apennine, received into his party the troops and ambassadors sent to retard his progress, and made a short halt at Interamna, about seventy miles from Rome. His victory was already secure, but the despair of the Prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of ascending the throne without drawing the sword.[35] His emissaries, dispersed in the capital, assured the guards, that, provided they would abandon their worthless prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the justice of the conqueror, he would no longer consider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithless Prætorians, whose resistance was supported only by sullen obstinacy, gladly complied with the easy conditions, seized the greatest part of the assassins, and signified to the senate that they no longer defended the cause of Julian. That assembly, convoked by the consul, unanimously acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to Pertinax, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against his unfortunate successor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, Is deserted by the Prætorians, and condemned and executed by order of the senate, A.D. 193, June 2.

[34] Hist. August. p. 62, 63.[a] [Spartian. Julian. c. 6, 7.]

[35] Victor [de Cæsar. c. 19, § 5], and Eutropius, viii. 9, mention a combat near the Milvian bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.

[a] Quæ ad speculum dicunt fieri in quo pueri præligatis oculis, incantato vertice, respicere dicuntur. * * Tuncque puer vidisse dicitur et adventum Severi et Juliani decessionem. This seems to have been a practice somewhat similar to that of which our recent Egyptian travellers relate such extraordinary circumstances. See also Apuleius, Orat. de Magiâ.—M.

an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days.[36] The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who, in so short a space of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tiber, proves at once the plenty of provisions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent subdued temper of the provinces.[37]

Disgrace of the Prætorian guards.

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge and the honours due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the Prætorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with levelled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of an hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction another detachment had been sent to seize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the hasty consequences of their despair.[38]

Funeral and apotheosis of Pertinax.

The funeral and consecration of Pertinax was next solemnized with every circumstance of sad magnificence.[39] The senate, with a melancholy pleasure, performed the last rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved and still regretted. The concern of his successor was probably less sincere: he esteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but those virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private station. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with studied eloquence, inward satisfaction, and well-acted sorrow; and by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that *he alone* was worthy to supply his place.

[36] Dion, l. lxxiii. [c. 17] p. 1240. Herodian, l. ii. [c. 12, *fin.*] p. 83. Hist. August. p. 63. [Spartian. Julian. c. 8.]

[37] From these sixty-six days we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April (see Hist. August. p. 65 [Spartian. Sever. c. 5], and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 393, note 7). We cannot allow less than ten days after his election to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march; and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission.

[38] Dion, l. lxxiv. [c. 1] p. 1241. Herodian, l. ii. [c. 13] p. 84.

[39] Dion (l. lxxiv. [c. 4] p. 1244), who assisted at the ceremony as a senator, gives a most pompous description of it.

Sensible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, [illegible] the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty [illegible] suffering himself to be elated by this easy victo[illegible] encounter his more formidable rivals.

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus have [illegible] elegant historian to compare him with the first and greatest [illegible] of the Cæsars.[40] The parallel is, at least, imperfect. Where [illegible] shall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding superiority of soul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could reconcile and unite the love of pleasure, the thirst of knowledge, and the fire of ambition?[41] In one instance only they may be compared, with some degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions and their civil victories. In less than four years[42] Severus subdued the riches of the East and the valour of the West. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own. In that age the art of fortification and the principles of tactics were well understood by all the Roman generals; and the constant superiority of Severus was that of an artist who uses the same instruments with more skill and industry than his rivals. I shall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of these military operations; but as the two civil wars against Niger and against Albinus were almost the same in their conduct, event, and consequences, I shall collect into one point of view the most striking circumstances tending to develop the character of the conqueror and the state of the empire.

[illegible] against Niger, against Albinus.

A.D. 193-197.

Falsehood and insincerity, unsuitable as they seem to the dignity of public transactions, offend us with a less degrading idea of meanness than when they are found in the intercourse of private life. In the latter, they discover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power: and, as it is impossible for the most able statesmen to subdue millions of followers and enemies by their own personal strength, the world, under the name of policy, seems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and dissimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be justified by the most ample privileges of state reason. He promised only to betray, he flattered only to ruin; and however he might occasionally

Conduct of the two civil wars.

Arts of Severus

[40] Herodian, l. iii. [c. 7] p. 112.

[41] Though it is not, most assuredly, the intention of Lucan to exalt the character of Cæsar, yet the idea he gives of that hero in the tenth book of the Pharsalia, where he describes him, at the same time, making love to Cleopatra, sustaining a siege against the power of Egypt, and conversing with the sages of the country, is, in reality, the noblest panegyric.

[42] Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.

and treaties, his conscience, obsequious to his ased him from the inconvenient obligation.[43] mpetitors, reconciled by their common danger, had nced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would ve sunk under their united effort. Had they even attacked e same time, with separate views and separate armies, the might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, singly successively, an easy prey to the arts as well as arms of their btle enemy, lulled into security by the moderation of his professions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He first marched against Niger, whose reputation and power he the most dreaded: but he declined any hostile declarations, suppressed the name of his antagonist, and only signified to the senate and people his intention of regulating the eastern provinces. In private, he spoke of Niger, his old friend and intended successor,[44] with the most affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous design of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To punish the vile usurper of the throne was the duty of every Roman general. To persevere in arms, and to resist a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the senate, would alone render him criminal.[45] The sons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents.[46] As long as the power of Niger inspired terror, or even respect, they were educated with the most tender care with the children of Severus himself; but they were soon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, first by exile and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compassion.[47]

towards Albinus.

Whilst Severus was engaged in his eastern war he had reason to apprehend that the governor of Britain might pass the sea and the Alps, occupy the vacant seat of empire, and oppose his return with the authority of the senate and the forces of the West. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not assuming the Imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting, at once, his professions of patriotism and the jealousy of sovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Cæsar as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the first contest was decided, Severus treated the man whom he had doomed to destruction with every mark of esteem and regard.

[43] Herodian, l. ii. [c. 13] p. 85.

[44] Whilst Severus was very dangerously ill, it was industriously given out that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his successors. As he could not be sincere with respect to both, he might not be so with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocrisy so far as to profess that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

[45] Hist. August. p. 65. [Spartian. Sever. c. 8.]

[46] This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very useful to Severus. He found at Rome the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or seduce, the parents.

[47] Herodian, l. iii. [c. 5] p. 96. Hist. August. p. 67, 68. [Spartian. Sever. c. 9, 10.]

Even in the letter in which he announced his victory over Niger, he styles Albinus the brother of his soul and empire, sends him the affectionate salutations of his wife Julia and his young family, and entreats him to preserve the armies and the republic faithful to their common interest. The messengers charged with this letter were instructed to accost the Cæsar with respect, to desire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart.[48] The conspiracy was discovered, and the too credulous Albinus at length passed over to the continent and prepared for an unequal contest with his rival, who rushed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

The military labours of Severus seem inadequate to the importance of his conquests. Two engagements,[a] the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the effeminate natives of Asia.[49] The battle of Lyons, where one hundred and fifty thousand Romans[50] were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The valour of the British army maintained, indeed, a sharp and doubtful contest with the hardy discipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and person of Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably lost, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops and led them on to a decisive victory.[51] The war was finished by that memorable day. Event of the civil wars.

The civil wars of modern Europe have been distinguished, not only by the fierce animosity, but likewise by the obstinate perseverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been justified by some principle, or, at least, coloured by some pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men interested in the decision of the quarrel; and as military spirit and party zeal were strongly diffused throughout the whole community, a vanquished chief was immediately supplied with new adherents eager to shed their blood in the same cause. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice decided by one or two battles.

[48] Hist. August. p. 81 [Capitol. Clod. Albin. c. 7, *seq.*]. Spartianus has inserted this curious letter at full length.

[49] Consult the third book of Herodian, and the seventy-fourth book of Dion Cassius.

[50] Dion, l. lxxv. [c. 6] p. 1260.

[51] Dion, l. lxxv. [c. 6] p. 1261. Herodian. l. iii. [c. 7] p. 110. Hist. August. p. 68. [Spartian. Sever. c. 11.] The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 406, note 18.

[a] There were three actions, one near Cyzicus on the Hellespont, one near Nicæa in Bithynia, the third near the Issus in Cilicia, where Alexander conquered Darius. Dion. lxxiv. c. 6 [and 7]. Herodian, iii. 2, 4.—W.

of masters. Under the standard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enlisted from affection, some from fear, many from interest, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives and still more liberal promises. A defeat, by disabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, dissolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers, and left them to consult their own safety by a timely desertion of an unsuccessful cause. It was of little moment to the provinces under whose name they were oppressed or governed; they were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and, as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immense debt to discharge, was obliged to sacrifice the most guilty countries to the avarice of his soldiers. In the vast extent of the Roman empire there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any person, or family, or order of men, whose natural interest, unsupported by the powers of government, was capable of restoring the cause of a sinking party.[52]

Siege of Byzantium.

Yet, in the contest between Niger and Severus, a single city deserves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greatest passages from Europe into Asia, it had been provided with a strong garrison, and a fleet of five hundred vessels was anchored in the harbour.[53] The impetuosity of Severus disappointed this prudent scheme of defence; he left to his generals the siege of Byzantium, forced the less guarded passage of the Hellespont, and, impatient of a meaner enemy, pressed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increasing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, sustained a siege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and soldiers (we know not from what cause) were animated with equal fury; several of the principal officers of Niger, who despaired of, or who disdained a pardon, had thrown themselves into this last refuge: the fortifications were esteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer displayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients.[54] Byzantium at length surrendered to famine. The magistrates and soldiers were put to the sword, the walls demolished, the privileges suppressed, and the

[52] Montesquieu, Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. xii.

[53] Most of these, as may be supposed, were small open vessels; some, however, were galleys of two, and a few of three ranks of oars.

[54] The engineer's name was Priscus. His skill saved his life, and he was taken into the service of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the siege, consult Dion Cassius (l. lxxiv. [c. 10] p. 1251), and Herodian (l. iii. [c. 6] p. 95): for the theory of it, the fanciful chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. i p. 76.

destined capital of the East subsisted only as an open village, subject to the insulting jurisdiction of Perinthus. The historian Dion, who had admired the flourishing, and lamented the desolate, state of Byzantium, accused the revenge of Severus for depriving the Roman people of the strongest bulwark against the barbarians of Pontus and Asia.[55] The truth of this observation was but too well justified in the succeeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and passed through the undefended Bosphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

Deaths of Niger and Albinus. Cruel consequences of the civil wars.

Both Niger and Albinus were discovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither surprise nor compassion. They had staked their lives against the chance of empire, and suffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant superiority of suffering his rivals to live in a private station. But his unforgiving temper, stimulated by avarice, indulged a spirit of revenge where there was no room for apprehension. The most considerable of the provincials, who, without any dislike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whose authority they were accidentally placed, were punished by death, exile, and especially by the confiscation of their estates. Many cities of the East were stripped of their ancient honours, and obliged to pay into the treasury of Severus four times the amount of the sums contributed by them for the service of Niger.[56]

Animosity of Severus against the senate.

Till the final decision of the war the cruelty of Severus was in some measure restrained by the uncertainty of the event and his pretended reverence for the senate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans that he was resolved to spare none of the adherents of his

[55] Notwithstanding the authority of Spartianus and some modern Greeks, we may be assured, from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins.[a]

[56] Dion, l. lxxiv. [c. 8] p. 1250.

[a] There is no contradiction between the relation of Dion and that of Spartianus and the modern Greeks. Dion does not say that Severus destroyed Byzantium, but that he deprived it of its franchises and privileges, stripped the inhabitants of their property, razed the fortifications, and subjected the city to the jurisdiction of Perinthus. Therefore, when Spartianus, Suidas, Cedrenus, say that Severus and his son Antoninus restored to Byzantium its rights and franchises, ordered temples to be built, &c., this is easily reconciled with the relation of Dion. Perhaps the latter mentioned it in some of the fragments of his history which have been lost. As to Herodian, his expressions are evidently exaggerated, and he has been guilty of so many inaccuracies in the history of Severus, that we have a right to suppose one in this passage.—G. from W. Wenck and M. Guizot have omitted to cite Zosimus, who mentions a particular portico built by Severus, and called apparently by his name. Zosim. Hist. ii. c. 30. p. 151. 153, edit. Heyne.—M.

unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the just suspicion that he had never possessed the affections of the senate, and he concealed his old malevolence under the recent discovery of some treasonable correspondences. Thirty-five senators, however, accused of having favoured the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned, and, by his subsequent behaviour, endeavoured to convince them that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their supposed offences. But, at the same time, he condemned forty-one [57] other senators, whose names history has recorded; their wives, children, and clients attended them in death, and the noblest provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the same ruin.[a] Such rigid justice, for so he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of ensuring peace to the people or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to lament that, to be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel.[58]

The wisdom and justice of his government.

The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security are the best and only foundations of his real greatness; and were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterised by attention, discernment, and impartiality; and, whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows,

[57] Dion (l. lxxv. [c. 8] p. 1262); only twenty-nine senators are mentioned by him, but forty-one are named in the Augustan History, p. 69 [Spartian. Sever. c. 13], among whom were six of the name of Pescennius. Herodian (l. iii. [c. 8] p. 115) speaks in general of the cruelties of Severus.

[58] Aurelius Victor.

[a] A new fragment of Dion describes the state of Rome during this contest. All pretended to be on the side of Severus; but their secret sentiments were often betrayed by a change of countenance on the arrival of some sudden report. Some were detected by overacting their loyalty, τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σφόδρα προσποιεῖσθαι πλέον ἐγινώσκοντο. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. p. 227. Severus told the senate he would rather have their hearts than their votes, ταῖς ψυχαῖς με φιλεῖτε, αἱ μὴ τοῖ ὑηφίσμασιν. *Ibid.*—M.

and, above all, a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affection of the Roman people.[59] The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity.[60] The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that warlike and successful emperor,[61] and he boasted, with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace.[62]

General peace and prosperity.

Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution. Severus possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability; but the daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline.[63] The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity. Elated by success, enervated by luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their dangerous privileges,[64] they soon became incapable of military fatigue, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination. Their officers asserted the superiority of rank by a more profuse and elegant luxury. There is still extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious state of the

Relaxation of military discipline.

[59] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 1] p. 1272. Hist. August. p. 67. [Spartian. Sever. c. 8.] Severus celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters, per day. I am persuaded that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term, but I am not less persuaded that policy on one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents. [Cf. Hist. Aug. p. 73 (Spart. Sever. c. 23).]

[60] See Spanheim's treatise of ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c., who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever.

[61] He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place.

[62] *Etiam in Britannis*, was his own just and emphatic expression. Hist. August. 73. [Spartian. Sever. c. 23.]

[63] Herodian, l. iii. [c. 8] p. 115. Hist. August. p. 68. [Spartian. Sever. c. 12.]

[64] Upon the insolence and privileges of the soldiers, the 16th satire, falsely ascribed to Juvenal, may be consulted; the style and circumstances of it would induce me to believe that it was composed under the reign of Severus, or that of his son.

army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the necessary reformation from the tribunes themselves; since, as he justly observes, the officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience, of his soldiers.[65] Had the emperor pursued the train of reflection, he would have discovered that the primary cause of this general corruption might be ascribed, not, indeed, to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander-in-chief.

New establishment of the Prætorian guards.

The Prætorians, who murdered their emperor and sold the empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the necessary, though dangerous, institution of guards, was soon restored on a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number.[66] Formerly these troops had been recruited in Italy; and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the softer manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of these elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uses of war, it was established by Severus, that from all the legions of the frontiers the soldiers most distinguished for strength, valour, and fidelity should be occasionally draughted, and promoted, as an honour and reward, into the more eligible service of the guards.[67] By this new institution the Italian youth were diverted from the exercise of arms, and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himself that the legions would consider these chosen Prætorians as the representatives of the whole military order; and that the present aid of fifty thousand men, superior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field against them, would for ever crush the hopes of rebellion, and secure the empire to himself and his posterity.

The office of Prætorian præfect.

The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the Prætorian præfect, who in his origin had been a simple captain of the guards,[b]

[65] Hist. August. p. 75. [Spartian. Pescenn. c. 3.]
[66] Herodian, l. iii. [c. 13] p. 131.
[67] Dion, l. lxxiv. [c. 2] p. 1243.

[a] Not of the army, but of the troops in Gaul. The contents of this letter seem to prove that Severus was really anxious to restore discipline. Herodian is the only historian who accuses him of being the first cause of its relaxation.—G. from W. Spartianus mentions his increase of the pay.—M.

[b] Although the Prætorian præfect was at first only the commander of the guards, and far inferior to the Præfectus Urbi, yet from his very position he had from the first great power and influence. To guard against the misuse of this power, Augustus took two precautions, first, by dividing the command between two

was placed not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law. In every department of administration he represented the person, and exercised the authority, of the emperor. The first præfect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the favourite minister of Severus. His reign lasted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the emperor, which seemed to assure his fortune, proved the occasion of his ruin.[68] The animosities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who still loved him, to consent with reluctance to his death.[69] After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of Prætorian præfect.

The senate oppressed by military despotism.

Till the reign of Severus the virtue, and even the good sense, of the emperors had been distinguished by their real or affected reverence for the senate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He disdained to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands where

[68] One of his most daring and wanton acts of power was the castration of an hundred free Romans, some of them married men, and even fathers of families, merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an eastern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 1] p. 1271.

[69] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 4] p. 1274. Herodian, l. iii. [c. 12] p. 122, 129. The grammarian of Alexandria seems, as is not unusual, much better acquainted with this mysterious transaction, and more assured of the guilt of Plautianus, than the Roman senator ventures to be.

præfects; and, secondly, by choosing them exclusively from the equestrian order. The wisdom of the first precaution was shown by the peril to which Tiberius was exposed by intrusting to Sejanus the sole command; and the second continued to be observed till the reign of Alexander Severus, when all danger to the monarchy from the influence of the senate had entirely disappeared. (Lamprid. Alex. Sever. c. 10.) After the reign of Tiberius there were generally two præfects, though occasionally we find only one, as in the case of Plautianus under Septimius Severus, and sometimes even three. (See c. 4, note 26.) The power of the præfects was extended, first, by placing all the troops in the empire under their authority, and, secondly, by giving them jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases. They appear to have obtained civil jurisdiction for the first time under Hadrian. As the præfects were regarded as the representatives of the emperors, they came to exercise all the functions of the emperors. Thus they possessed not only the supreme military and judicial authority, but even legislative powers, and the control of the finances and the provinces. Hence the office lost its exclusively military character, and was frequently held by civilians. See Drakenborch, De Officio Præfecti Prætorio, Traj. ad Rhen. 1707; Marquardt in Becker's Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, vol. ii. pt. ii. p. 286, seq. —S.

his request would have proved as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power.

New maxims of the Imperial prerogative.

The victory over the senate was easy and inglorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public spirit, rested its declining authority on the frail and crumbling basis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were successively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek historians of the age of the Antonines[70] observe, with a malicious pleasure, that, although the sovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obsolete prejudice, abstained from the name of king, he possessed the full measure of regal power. In the reign of Severus the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces, who justified personal flattery by speculative principles of servitude. These new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleasure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom. The lawyers and the historians concurred in teaching that the Imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commission, but by the irrevocable resignation of the senate; that the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws, could command, by his arbitrary will, the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dispose of the empire as of his private patrimony.[71] The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished under the house of Severus; and the Roman jurisprudence, having closely united itself with the system of monarchy, was supposed to have attained its full maturity and perfection.

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, justly considered him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.

[70] Appian in Procem. [c. 6.]

[71] Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view than to form these opinions into an historical system. The Pandects will show how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboured in the cause of prerogative.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH OF SEVERUS — TYRANNY OF CARACALLA — USURPATION OF MACRINUS — FOLLIES OF ELAGABALUS — VIRTUES OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS — LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE ARMY — GENERAL STATE OF THE ROMAN FINANCES.

Greatness and discontent of Severus.

THE ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers: but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. "He had been all things," as he said himself, "and all was of little value."[1] Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame,[2] and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

His wife the empress Julia.

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpretation of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology; which, in almost every age except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife whilst he was governor of the Lyonnese Gaul.[3] In the choice of a second he sought only to connect himself with some favourite of fortune; and as soon as he had discovered that a young lady of Emesa in Syria had *a royal nativity*, he solicited and obtained her hand.[4] Julia Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her. She possessed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty,[5] and

[1] Hist. August. p. 71. [Spart. Sever. c. 18.] "Omnia fui, et nihil expedit."

[2] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvi. [c. 16] p. 1284.

[3] About the year 186. M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv. [c. 3] p. 1243). The learned compiler forgot that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *consummated* in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389, Note 6.

[4] Hist. August. p. 65. [Spartian. Sever. c. 3.]

[5] Hist. August. p. 89. [Spartian. Caracal. c. 10.]

united to a lively imagination a firmness of mind and strength of judgment seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but, in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire with a prudence that supported his authority, and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagancies.[6] Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy with some success and with the most splendid reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius.[7] The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtues; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the empress Julia.[8a]

Their two sons, Caracalla and Geta.

Two sons, Caracalla[9] and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by these vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes, and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other.

Their mutual aversion to each other.

Their aversion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their interested favourites, broke out in childish, and gradually in more serious, competitions; and at length divided the theatre, the circus, and the court into two factions, actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne raised with so much labour, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of

[6] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. [c. 18] p. 1304 [l. lxxviii. c. 4], 1312.

[7] See a dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philosophis.

[8] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 16] p. 1285. Aurelius Victor. [De Cæs. xx. 23.]

[9] Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. After his death the public indignation loaded him with the nicknames of Tarantus and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated gladiator, the second from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome.[b]

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[a] The glowing character of Julia given by Gibbon is taken from Dion, whilst the other authorities speak very unfavourably of her, and even charge her with an incestuous intercourse with her son Caracalla. See the note of Reimarus on Dion, p. 1304.—S.

[b] Modern writers usually call him Caracalla, but Caracallus is the form found in the ancient writers.—S.

Antoninus; and for the first time the Roman world beheld three emperors.[10] Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices.[11]

Three emperors.

In these circumstances the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions; and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age (for he was above three-score), and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country with a design of completing the long attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty thousand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms and a large tract of territory. But their apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired they resumed their hostile independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy.[12]

The Caledonian war, A.D. 208.

This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but it is supposed, not without a considerable degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most shining period of the British history or fable.

Fingal and his heroes.

[10] The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198; the association of Geta to the year 208.

[11] Herodian, l. iii. [c. 13] p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta, in the Augustan History.

[12] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 12] p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. iii. [c. 14, *sq.*] p. 132, &c.

Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the son of *the King of the World*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride.[13] Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism;[14] but, if we could with safety indulge the pleasing supposition that Fingal lived and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the Imperial standard, with the free-born warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

Contrast of the Caledonians and the Romans.

The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops.[15] The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigour of a judge dissolves away in the

Ambition of Caracalla.

[13] Ossian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.

[14] That the Caracul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman history is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war the son of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus, and it may seem strange that the Highland bard should describe him by a nickname, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 9] p. 1317. Hist. August. p. 89. [Spartian. Caracal. c. 9.] Aurel. Victor. [Epitome, c. 21.] Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.[a]

[15] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 14] p. 1282. Hist. August. p. 72. [Spartian. Sever. c. 20.] Aurel. Victor.

[a] The historical authority of Macpherson's Ossian has not increased since Gibbon wrote. We may, indeed, consider it exploded. Mr. Whitaker, in a letter to Gibbon (Misc. Works, vol. ii. p. 100), attempts, not very successfully, to weaken this objection of the historian. -M.

tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty.[16] The disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York, in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the solicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power.[17]

Death of Severus, and accession of his two sons, A.D. 211, February 4.

Such a divided form of government would have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them, judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never eat at the same table, or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the imperial palace.[18] No communication was allowed

Jealousy and hatred of the two emperors.

[16] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 14] p. 1283. Hist. August. p. 89. [Spartian. Caracal. c. 11.]

[17] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 15] p. 1284. Herodian. l. iii. [c. 15] p. 135.

[18] Mr. Hume is justly surprised at a passage of Herodian (l. iv. [c. 1] p. 139), who, on this occasion, represents the Imperial palace as equal [greater, πάσης πόλεως μείζων —S.] in extent to the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount, on which it was built, occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet (see the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica). But we should recollect that the opulent senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and suburb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum, and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, the rival brothers were separated from each other by the distance of several miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the Imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c., all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular dissertation, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome. (Hume, Essay on Populousness of Ancient Nations.—M.)

between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother; and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts.[19]

This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that seemed of mutual benefit to the hostile brothers. It was proposed, that, since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa; and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the East. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negotiation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread that the disjointed members would soon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one master; but if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate.[20]

Fruitless negotiation for dividing the empire between them.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier, though a more guilty, victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation, some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting[21] the fury of the assassins. As

Murder of Geta, A.D. 212, Feb. 27.

[19] Herodian, l. iv. [c. 1] p. 139. [20] Herodian, l. iv. [c. 4] p. 144.

[21] Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 23] p. 1307.

soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Prætorian camp, as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelar deities.[22] The soldiers attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate escape; insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his faithful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was dangerous, and they still reverenced the son of Severus. Their discontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of the justice of his cause, by distributing in one lavish donative the accumulated treasures of his father's reign.[23] The real *sentiments* of the soldiers alone were of importance to his power or safety. Their declaration in his favour commanded the dutiful *professions* of the senate. The obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify the decision of fortune;[a] but as Caracalla wished to assuage the first emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor.[24] Posterity, in pity to his misfortune, has cast a veil over his vices. We consider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himself wanted power, rather than inclination, to consummate the same attempts of revenge and murder.[b]

The crime went not unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother rising into life to threaten

Remorse and cruelty of Caracalla.

[22] Herodian, l. iv. [c. 4] p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head-quarters, in which the statues of the tutelar deities were preserved and adored: and we may remark that the eagles, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities; an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, iv. 5, v. 2.

[23] Herodian, l. iv. [c. 4] p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 3] p. 1289.

[24] Geta was placed among the gods. Sit *divus*, dum non sit *vivus*, said his brother. Hist. August. p. 91. [Spartian Geta, c. 2.] Some marks of Geta's consecration are still found upon medals.

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[a] The account of this transaction in a new passage of Dion varies in some degree from this statement. It adds that the next morning, in the senate, Antoninus requested their indulgence, not because he had killed his brother, but because he was hoarse and could not address them. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. p. 228.—M.

[b] The favourable judgment which history has given of Geta is not founded solely on a feeling of pity; it is supported by the testimony of contemporary historians: he was too fond of the pleasures of the table, and showed great mistrust of his brother; but he was humane, well instructed: he often endeavoured to mitigate the rigorous decrees of Severus and Caracalla. Herod. iv. 3. Spartianus in Getâ [c. 4].—W.

and upbraid him.[25] The consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recall the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death; the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus;[a] and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependants, were included in the proscription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the smallest correspondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name.[26] Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, lost his life by an unseasonable witticism.[27] It was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality.[28] The particular causes of calumny and suspicion were at length exhausted; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with

[25] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 15] p. 1301.

[26] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 4] p. 1290. Herodian, l. iv. [c. 6] p. 150. Dion (p. 1298) [l. lxxvii. 12] says that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name of Geta in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments were confiscated.

[27] Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained some advantage over the Goths or Getæ) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89 [and 92; Spartian. Caracal. c. 10, and Geta, c. 6].

[28] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 5] p. 1291. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus and Thrasea Pætus, those patriots, whose firm, but useless and unseasonable, virtue has been immortalised by Tacitus.

[a] The most valuable paragraph of Dion which the industry of M. Mai has recovered relates to this daughter of Marcus executed by Caracalla. Her name, as appears from Fronto as well as from Dion, was Cornificia. When commanded to choose the kind of death she was to suffer, she burst into womanish tears; but, remembering her father Marcus, she thus spoke:—"O my hapless soul (ψυχίδιον, animula), now imprisoned in the body, burst forth! be free! show them, however reluctant to believe it, that thou art the daughter of Marcus." She then laid aside all her ornaments, and, preparing herself for death, ordered her veins to be opened. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. ii. p. 230.—M.

the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloody inferences.[a]

The execution of so many innocent citizens was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Prætorian præfect, was lamented as a public calamity.[b] During the last seven years of Severus he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtue and abilities, Severus, on his deathbed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and union of the Imperial family.[29] The honest labours of Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived against his father's minister. After the murder of Geta, the præfect was commanded to exert the powers of his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca had condescended to compose a similar epistle to the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of Agrippina.[30] "That it was easier to commit than to justify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian;[31] who did not hesitate between the loss of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and unsullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects more lustre on the memory of Papinian than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the superior reputation as a lawyer which he has preserved through every age of the Roman jurisprudence.[32]

Death of Papinian.

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times their consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and

His tyranny extended over the whole empire.

[29] It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.
[30] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 11.
[31] Hist. August. p. 88. [Spartian. Caracal. c. 8.]
[32] With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's Historia Juris Romani, l. 330, &c.

[a] Caracalla reproached all those who demanded no favours of him. "It is clear that, if you make me no requests, you do not trust me; if you do not trust me, you suspect me; if you suspect me, you fear me; if you fear me, you hate me." And forthwith he condemned them as conspirators. A good specimen of the sorites in a tyrant's logic. See Fragm. Vatican. p. 230.—M.

[b] Papinian was no longer Prætorian præfect: Caracalla had deprived him of that office immediately after the death of Severus. Such is the statement of Dion; and the testimony of Spartianus, who gives Papinian the Prætorian præfecture till his death, is of little weight opposed to that of a senator then living at Rome. —W.

Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders.[33] But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the East, and every province was, by turns, the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect in every city magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes.[34] In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands at Alexandria, in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly informed the senate, *all* the Alexandrians, those who had perished, and those who had escaped, were alike guilty.[35]

A.D. 213.

The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity.[36] One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla—"To secure the affections of the army, and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little "moment."[37] But the liberality of the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by

Relaxation of discipline.

[3] Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum Principum usus ex æquo, quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. iv. 74.

[34] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 9] p. 1294.

[35] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 23] p. 1307. Herodian, l. iv. [c. 9] p. 158. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It seems probable that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults.[a]

[36] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 11] p. 1296.

[37] Dion, l. lxxvi. [c. 15] p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hist. of Rome, p. 330) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself, and attributed to his father.

[a] After these massacres Caracalla also deprived the Alexandrians of their spectacles and public feasts: he divided the city into two parts by a wall, with towers at intervals, to prevent the peaceful communications of the citizens. Thus was treated the unhappy Alexandria, says Dion, by the savage beast of Ausonia. This, in fact, was the epithet which the oracle had applied to him; it is said, indeed, that he was much pleased with the name, and often boasted of it. Dion, lxxvii. [c. 23] p. 1307.—G.

firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives[38] exhausted the state to enrich the military order, whose modesty in peace, and service in war, is best secured by an honourable poverty. The demeanour of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their insolent familiarity, and, neglecting the essential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dress and manners of a common soldier.

It was impossible that such a character and such a conduct as that of Caracalla could inspire either love or esteem; but, as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was secure from the danger of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Prætorian præfecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the

Murder of Caracalla, A.D. 217, March 8.

[38] Dion (l. lxxviii. [c. 36] p. 1343) informs us that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of drachmæ (about two millions three hundred and fifty thousand pounds). There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious; were it not obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the Prætorian guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (forty pounds a year) (Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 24] p. 1307). Under the reign of Augustus they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Tacit. Annal. i. 17). Domitian, who increased the soldiers' pay one fourth, must have raised the Prætorians to 960 drachmæ (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. iii. c. 2). These successive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the soldiers' pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the Prætorians alone increased from 10,000 to 50,000 men.[a]

[a] Valois and Reimar have explained in a very simple and probable manner this passage of Dion, which Gibbon seems to me not to have understood. Ὁ αὐτὸς τοῖς στρατιώταις ἆθλα τῆς στρατείας, τοῖς μὲν ἐν τῷ δορυφορικῷ τεταγμένοις εἰς χιλίας διακοσίας πεντήκοντα, τοῖς δὲ πεντακισχίλιας λαμβάνειν. He ordered that the soldiers should receive, as the reward of their services, the Prætorians 1250 drachms, the others 5000 drachms. Valois thinks that the numbers have been transposed, and that Caracalla added 5000 drachms to the donations made to the Prætorians, 1250 to those of the legionaries. The Prætorians, in fact, always received more than the others. The error of Gibbon arose from his considering that this referred to the *annual pay* of the soldiers, while it relates to the sum they received as a reward for their services, on their discharge: ἆθλον τῆς στρατείας means recompence for service. Augustus had settled that the Prætorians after sixteen campaigns should receive 5000 drachms: the legionaries received only 3000 after twenty years. Caracalla added 5000 drachms to the donative of the Prætorians, 1250 to that of the legionaries. Gibbon appears to have been mistaken both in confounding this donative on discharge with the annual pay, and in not paying attention to the remark of Valois on the transposition of the numbers in the text.—G.

emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the præfect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the *successors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But, notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprise him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and, as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot-race, he delivered them unopened to the Prætorian præfect, directing him to despatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperate soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhæ.[a] He was attended by a body of cavalry; but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis, approaching his person under a pretence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans.[39] The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed, with a puerile enthusiasm, the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive that, after the battle of Narva and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he

Imitation of Alexander.

[39] Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 5] p. 1313. Herodian, l. iv. [c. 13] p. 168.

[a] Carrhæ, now Harran, between Edessa and Nisibis, famous for the defeat of Crassus—the Haran from whence Abraham set out for the land of Canaan. This city has always been remarkable for its attachment to Sabaism.—G.

still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity; but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends.[40]

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in anxious suspense; as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the Prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their præfects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the senior præfect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his small reputation, and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well-dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessory to his master's death.[41] The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A short time after his accession he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

Election and character of Macrinus.

A.D. 217, March 11.

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it seemed of little consequence to examine into the virtues of the successor of Caracalla. But as soon as the first transports of joy and surprise had subsided, they began to scrutinise the merits of Macrinus with a critical severity, and to arraign the hasty choice of the army. It had hitherto been considered as a fundamental maxim of the constitution, that the emperor must be always chosen in the senate, and the sovereign power, no longer exercised by the whole

Discontent of the senate,

[40] The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. [c. 8, *init.*] p. 154) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.

[41] Herodian, l. iv. [c. 14] p. 169. Hist. August. p. 94. [Capitol. Macr. c. 4.]

body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a senator.[42] The sudden elevation of the Prætorian præfects betrayed the meanness of their origin; and the equestrian order was still in possession of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard that a man whose obscure[43] extraction had never been illustrated by any signal service should dare to invest himself with the purple, instead of bestowing it on some distinguished senator, equal in birth and dignity to the splendour of the Imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in many instances justly censured, and the dissatisfied people, with their usual candour, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity.[44]

His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude, over whom he had assumed the command; his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected; a whisper that circulated in the camp disclosed the fatal secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting; and such was the peculiar hardship of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder; and if that worthless tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors.

and the army.

[42] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 1] p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predecessor with daring to seat himself on the throne; though, as Prætorian præfect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the crier had cleared the house. The personal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the established rule. They rose, indeed, from the equestrian order; but they preserved the præfecture with the rank of senator, and even with the consulship.

[43] He was a native of Cæsarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whose ruin he narrowly escaped. His enemies asserted that he was born a slave, and had exercised, among other infamous professions, that of gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators to the learned grammarians of the last age.

[44] Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus with candour and impartiality; but the author of his Life, in the Augustan History, seems to have implicitly copied some of the venal writers employed by Elagabalus to blacken the memory of his predecessor.

In the management of this necessary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence which would have restored health and vigour to the Roman army in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate though liberal establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience.[45] One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army assembled in the East by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service whose labours were increased while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed the occasion soon presented itself.

Macrinus attempts a reformation of the army.

The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself, by a voluntary death, from the anxious and humiliating dependence.[46] Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty

Death of the empress Julia. Education, pretensions, and revolt of Elagabalus, called at first Bassianus and Antoninus.

[45] Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 28] p. 1336. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but Mr. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.

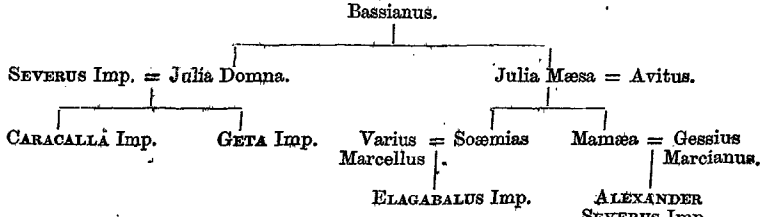
[46] Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 23] p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

years' favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of whom was a widow, and each had an only son.[a] Bassianus,[b] for that was the name of the son of Soæmias, was consecrated to the honourable ministry of high priest of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or superstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was stationed at Emesa; and, as the severe discipline of Macrinus had constrained them to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hardships. The soldiers, who resorted in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dress and figure of the young pontiff: they recognised, or they thought that they recognised, the features of Caracalla, whose memory they now adored. The artful Mæsa saw and cherished their rising partiality, and, readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered sovereign. The sums distributed by her emissaries with a lavish hand silenced every objection, and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity, or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had assumed and polluted that respectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa, asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the standard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge his father's death and the oppression of the military order.[47]

A.D. 218, May 16.

[47] According to Lampridius (Hist. August. p. 135 [A. Sever. c. 60]), Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was consequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes than that of Herodian (l. v. [c. 3] p. 181), who represents them as three years younger: whilst, by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 31] p. 1339. Herodian, l. v. [c. 3, *sq.*] p. 184.

[a] The following genealogical table will illustrate the account in the text.—S.



[b] He was originally called Varius Avitus Bassianus, a series of names derived from his father (Varius), maternal grandfather (Avitus), and maternal great-grandfather (Bassianus). See the preceding note.—S.

Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a decisive motion, might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria; successive detachments murdered their officers,[48] and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle,[49] the Prætorian guards, almost by an involuntary impulse, asserted the superiority of their valour and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who, in the rest of his life, never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys, whose occupations had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate. As soon as the stubborn Prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror: the contending parties of the Roman army, mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banners of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the East acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

Defeat and death of Macrinus.

A.D. 218, June 7.

The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and

Elagabalus writes to the senate.

[48] By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every soldier who brought in his officer's head became entitled to his private estate, as well as to his military commission.

[49] Dion, l. lxxviii. [c. 37] p. 1344. Herodian, l. v. [c. 4] p. 186. The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two-and-twenty miles from Antioch.

his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more especially those of the East, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria must reign over the empire. The specious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus he should ever consider as the great rule of his administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged, by a successful war, the murder of his father. By adopting the style of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of Antoninus, and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by assuming the tribunitian and proconsular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his military followers.[50]

Picture of Elagabalus, A.D. 219.

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia his first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the senate-house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white.[51] The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism.

The Sun was worshipped at Emesa, under the name of Elagabalus,[52]

[50] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 4] p. 1353.
[51] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 14] p. 1363. Herodian, l. v. [c. 5] p. 189.
[52] This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *Ela*, a god, and

and under the form of a black conical stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without some reason, ascribed his elevation to the throne. The display of superstitious gratitude was the only serious business of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emesa over all the religions of the earth was the great object of his zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatness. In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome the way was strewed with gold-dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions with affected zeal and secret indignation.[53] His superstition.

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worship, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium,[54] and all the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various stations the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his court was still imperfect, till a female of distinguished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been first chosen for his consort; but as it was dreaded lest her warlike terrors might affright the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adored by the Africans under

Gabal, to form—the forming, or plastic god; a proper, and even happy epithet for the Sun.[a] Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378.

[53] Herodian, l. v. [c. 5, *fin.*] p. 190.

[54] He broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the Palladium; but the vestals boasted that, by a pious fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hist. August. p. 103. [Lamprid. Heliogab. c. 6.]

[a] The name of Elagabalus was corrupted by Lampridius and the later writers into Heliogabalus, because the god was identified with Helios or the sun. Herodian writes the name Ἐλαιαγάβαλος; Dion, Ἐλεγάβαλος; but Elagabalus is the correct form, as we see from medals. (Eckhel, Doctrina Numorum Veterum, vol. vii. p. 250.) With respect to its etymology, the Syrian name was probably *Al Gebal*, "the mountain," *al* being the article. The conical stone, under which form the sun was worshipped at Emesa, is represented on the medals of Elagabalus. See Movers, Die Phönizier, vol. i. p. 669.—S.

the name of Astarte,[a] was deemed a more suitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was transported with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of these mystic nuptials was a general festival in the capital and throughout the empire.[55]

His profligate and effeminate luxury.

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connections, and the soft colouring of taste and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I speak of the emperor of that name), corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid: the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronised by the monarch,[56] signalised his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times. A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance; and whilst Elagabalus lavished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a spirit and magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors. To confound the order of seasons and climates,[57] to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her sacred asylum,[58] were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonoured the principal dignities of the empire

[55] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 12] p. 1360. Herodian, l. v. [c. 6] p. 193. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus was carefully exacted under the administration of Mamæa.

[56] The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else till he had discovered another more agreeable to the Imperial palate. Hist. August. [Lampr. Heliogab. c. 29] p. 111.

[57] He never would eat sea-fish except at a great distance from the sea; he then would distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts, brought at an immense expense, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. August. p. 109. [Lampr. Heliogab. c. 23.]

[58] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 9] p. 1358. Herodian, l. v. [c. 6] p. 192.

[a] Astarte was a *Syrian* name, though the goddess was also worshipped in Africa (in Carthage and the other Phœnician colonies). Dion and Herodian say that her African name was Urania, that is, the queen of heaven.—S.

by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband.[59]

It may seem probable the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy and blackened by prejudice.[60] Yet, confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians, their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The licence of an eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of his seraglio. The sentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe;[a] but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without restraint in the patient and humble society of their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the same contemptuous indifference, asserted without control his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury. Contempt of decency which distinguished the Roman tyrants.

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander, the son of Mamæa. The crafty Mæsa, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander and to invest him with the title of Cæsar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the Discontents of the army. Alexander Severus declared Cæsar, A.D. 221.

[59] Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived by a potion to enervate the powers of his rival, who, being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 15, 16] p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made præfect of the city, a charioteer præfect of the watch, a barber præfect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended *enormitate membrorum*. Hist. August. p. 105. [Lampr. Heliogab. c. 12.]

[60] Even the credulous compiler of his Life, in the Augustan History (p. 111) [Lampr. Heliogab. c. 30, *fin.*], is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

[a] Wenck has justly observed that Gibbon should have reckoned the influence of Christianity in this great change. In the most savage times and the most corrupt courts, since the introduction of Christianity, there have been no Neros or Domitians, no Commodus or Elagabalus. —M.

second rank that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival. His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs were constantly discovered by his own loquacious folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and faithful servants whom the prudence of Mamæa had placed about the person of her son. In a hasty sally of passion Elagabalus resolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compass by fraud, and by a despotic sentence degraded his cousin from the rank and honours of Cæsar. The message was received in the senate with silence, and in the camp with fury. The Prætorian guards swore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the dishonoured majesty of the throne. The tears and promises of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to spare his life and to leave him in the possession of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their just indignation; and they contented themselves with empowering their præfects to watch over the safety of Alexander and the conduct of the emperor.[61]

Sedition of the guards and murder of Elagabalus, A.D. 222, March 10.

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on such humiliating terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the soldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural suspicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the tempest of the camp could only be appeased by the presence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant Prætorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city and thrown into the Tiber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity.[62]

[61] Dion, l. lxxix. [c. 19] p. 1366. Herodian, l. v. [c. 8] p. 195–201. Hist. August. p. 105. [Lampr. Heliog. c. 13, *sq.*] The last of the three historians seems to have followed the best authors in his account of the revolution.

[62] The æra of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valsecchi, Vignoli, and Torre bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I still adhere to the authority of Dion, the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We shall reply, with the learned Valsecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After resolving this

In the room of Elagabalus his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the Prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed, was the same as that of his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him in one day the various titles and powers of the Imperial dignity.[63] But as Alexander was a modest and dutiful youth of only seventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæsa his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who survived but a short time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the sole regent of her son and of the empire.

Accession of Alexander Severus.

In every age and country the wiser, or at least the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the powers of the state, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of chivalry and the law of succession have accustomed us to allow a singular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the absolute sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were still considered as the generals and magistrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the name of Augusta, were never associated to their personal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect.[64] The haughty Agrippina aspired, indeed, to share the honours of the empire which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was dis-

Power of his mother Mamæa.

great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied or cut asunder.[a]

[63] Hist. August. p. 114. [Lampr. Alex. Sever. c. 1.] By this unusual precipitation the senate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.

[64] Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that, had kind nature allowed us to exist without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.

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[a] This opinion of Valsecchi has been triumphantly contested by Eckhel, who has shown the impossibility of reconciling it with the medals of Elagabalus, and has given the most satisfactory explanation of the five tribunates of that emperor. He ascended the throne and received the tribunitian power the 16th of May, in the year of Rome 971; and on the 1st January of the next year, 972, he began a new tribunate, according to the custom established by preceding emperors. During the years 972, 973, 974, he enjoyed the tribunate, and commenced his fifth in the year 975, during which he was killed on the 10th March. Eckhel de Doct. Num. vol. viii. p. 430, &c.—G.

appointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus.[65] The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus to disgrace the acts of the senate with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the side of the consuls, and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamæa, declined the useless and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted excluding women for ever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated.[66] The substance, not the pageantry, of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a patrician; but his respect for his father-in-law and love for the empress were inconsistent with the tenderness or interest of Mamæa. The patrician was executed on the ready accusation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace and banished into Africa.[67]

Wise and moderate administration.

Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as some instances of avarice with which Mamæa is charged, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themselves to remove his worthless creatures from every department of public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only recommendations for civil offices; valour, and the love of discipline, the only qualifications for military employments.[68]

[65] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 5.

[66] Hist. August. p. 102, 107. [Lampr. Heliog. c. 4 and 18.]

[67] Dion, l. lxxx. [c. 2] p. 1369. Herodian, l. vi. [c. 1] p. 206. Hist. August. p. 131. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 49.] Herodian represents the patrician as innocent. The Augustan History, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them: but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mamæa towards the young empress, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose.

[68] Herodian, l. vi. [c. 1] p. 203. Hist. August. p. 119. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 15

But the most important care of Mamæa and her wise counsellors was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labour. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poison of flattery. Education and virtuous temper of Alexander.

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor,[69] and, with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early; the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved the grateful reverence of posterity. But, as he deemed the service of mankind the most acceptable worship of the gods, the greatest part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he discussed public affairs, and determined private causes, with a patience and discretion above his years. The dryness of business was relieved by the charms of literature; and a portion of time was always set apart for his favourite studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the Republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taste, enlarged his understanding, and gave him the noblest ideas of man and government. The exercises of the body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robust, surpassed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts. Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight dinner, he resumed, with new vigour, the business of the day; and, till the hour of supper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his secretaries, with whom he read and answered the multitude of letters, memorials, and peti- Journal of his ordinary life.

and 16.] The latter insinuates[a] that, when any law was to be passed, the council was assisted by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given and taken down in writing.

[69] See his Life in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumstances.

[a] He does not insinuate, he expressly states it. The Consilium, or State-Council, which had been instituted by Augustus (see note on p. 206) appears to have fallen into neglect after the death of Septimius Severus, but was re-established by Alexander Severus, who enlarged its functions. See Walter, Geschichte des Römischen Rechts, § 259; Niebuhr, Lectures on the History of Rome, vol. iii. p. 274.—S.

tions, that must have been addressed to the master of the greatest part of the world. His table was served with the most frugal simplicity; and whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their conversation was familiar and instructive; and the pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital of some pleasing composition, which supplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans.[70] The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanour courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition: "Let none enter "those holy walls unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind."[71]

General happiness of the Roman world, A.D. 222-235.

Such an uniform tenor of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus the Roman world had experienced, during the term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus it enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years.[a] The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates who were convinced by experience that to deserve the love of the subjects was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions and the interest of money were reduced by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate was restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor without a fear and without a blush.

Alexander refuses the name of Antoninus.

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the sons of Severus,

[70] See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.

[71] Hist. August. p. 119. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 18.]

[a] Wenck observes that Gibbon, enchanted with the virtue of Alexander, has heightened, particularly in this sentence, its effect on the state of the world. His own account, which follows, of the insurrections and foreign wars, is not in harmony with this beautiful picture.—M.

was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length prostituted to the infamy of the high priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and perhaps sincere, importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his whole conduct he laboured to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines.[72]

He attempts to reform the army.

In the civil administration of Alexander wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise—the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, confirmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the restraints of discipline, and careless of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his design the emperor affected to display his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The most rigid economy in every other branch of the administration supplied a fund of gold and silver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days' provision on their shoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads; and as soon as they entered the enemy's country a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted at least to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splendid armour, and shields enriched with silver and gold. He shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited in person the sick and wounded, preserved an exact register of their services and his own gratitude, and expressed on every occasion the warmest regard for a body of men whose welfare, as he affected to declare, was so closely connected with that of the state.[73] By the most gentle arts he laboured to inspire the fierce multitude with a sense of duty, and to restore at least a faint image of that discipline to which the Romans owed their empire over so many other nations as warlike and more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

[72] See in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117 [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 6, *sqq.*], the whole contest between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It happened on the sixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it as a family name.

[73] It was a favourite saying of the emperor's, Se milites magis servare, quam seipsum; quod salus publica in his esset. Hist. Aug. p. 130. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 47.]

Seditions of the Prætorian guards, and murder of Ulpian.

The Prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but, as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of reason and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their præfect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged during three days in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was defended by the grateful people. Terrified at length by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the Imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers.[a] Such was the deplorable weakness of government that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend, and his insulted dignity, without stooping to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome by the honourable employment of præfect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when at length his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy but deserved punishment of his crimes.[74] Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death his most faithful ministers who were suspected of an intention to correct their intolerable disorders. The historian

[74] Though the author of the Life of Alexander (Hist. August. p. 132 [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 51]) mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might discover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

[a] Gibbon has confounded two events altogether different — the quarrel of the people with the Prætorians, which lasted three days, and the assassination of Ulpian by the latter. Dion relates first the death of Ulpian; afterwards, reverting back according to a manner which is usual with him, he says that during the life of Ulpian there had been a war of three days between the Prætorians and the people. But Ulpian was not the cause. Dion says, on the contrary, that it was occasioned by some unimportant circumstance; whilst he assigns a weighty reason for the murder of Ulpian, the judgment by which that Prætorian præfect had condemned his predecessors, Chrestus and Flavian, to death, whom the soldiers wished to revenge. Zosimus (l. i. c. 11.) attributes this sentence to Mamæa; but even then the troops might have imputed it to Ulpian, who had reaped all the advantage, and was otherwise odious to them.—W.

Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamours, showed a just sense of his merit and services by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expense of that vain dignity; but, as it was justly apprehended that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office they would revenge the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate of the state retired, by the emperor's advice, from the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania.[75] [a]

Danger of Dion Cassius.

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiousness with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontents of the army.[76] One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers who had been discovered in the baths of women excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and with a modest firmness represented to the armed multitude the absolute necessity, as well as his inflexible resolution, of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild expostulation. "Reserve your shouts," said the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field against the Persians, the Germans, "and the Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your sovereign and

Tumults of the legions.

Firmness of the emperor.

[75] For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's History, l. lxxx. [c. 2 and 4] p. 1371.

[76] Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. [c. 2] p. 1369.

[a] Dion possessed no estates in Campania, and was not rich. He only says that the emperor advised him to reside during his consulate in some place out of Rome; that he returned to Rome after the end of his consulate, and had an interview with the emperor in Campania. He asked and obtained leave to pass the rest of his life in his native city (Nice, in Bithynia): it was there that he finished his history, which closes with his second consulship. —W.

" benefactor, who bestows upon you the corn, the clothing, and the " money of the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer style you " soldiers, but *citizens*,[77] if those indeed who disclaim the laws of " Rome deserve to be ranked among the meanest of the people." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandished arms already threatened his person. " Your courage," resumed the intrepid Alexander, " would be more nobly displayed in the field of " battle; *me* you may destroy, you cannot intimidate; and the " severe justice of the republic would punish your crime and revenge " my death." The legion still persisted in clamorous sedition, when the emperor pronounced with a loud voice the decisive sentence, " *Citizens!* lay down your arms, and depart in peace to your respec- " tive habitations." The tempest was instantly appeased: the soldiers, filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the justice of their punishment and the power of discipline, yielded up their arms and military ensigns, and retired in confusion, not to their camp, but to the several inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spectacle of their repentance; nor did he restore them to their former rank in the army till he had punished with death those tribunes whose connivance had occasioned the mutiny. The grateful legion served the emperor whilst living, and revenged him when dead.[78] [a]

Defects of his reign and character.

The resolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of passion might equally determine the seditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if the singular transaction had been investigated by the penetration of a philosopher, we should discover the secret causes which on that occasion authorised the boldness of the prince, and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious historian, we should find this action, worthy of Cæsar himself, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common standard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his situation, the firmness of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His

[77] Julius Cæsar had appeased a sedition with the same word *Quirites;* which, thus opposed to *Soldiers,* was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honourable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. i. 42.

[78] Hist. August. p. 132. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 54.]

[a] This story rests solely on the authority of Lampridius, whose Life of Alexander is characterised by Gibbon on the next page as " the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia." The whole tale is probably a fabrication, taken from the celebrated anecdote about the first Cæsar; but the Prætorians were no longer the old Roman legions, and Alexander was certainly no Cæsar.—S.

virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he blushed at his foreign origin, and listened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogists, who derived his race from the ancient stock of Roman nobility.[79] The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade on the glories of his reign; and by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamæa exposed to public ridicule both her son's character and her own.[80] The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event[a] degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a soldier. Every cause prepared, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which distracted the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

Digression on the finances of the empire.

The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can interest us no farther than as they are connected with the general history of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice, and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.

[79] From the Metelli. Hist. August. p. 129. [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 44.] The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years the Metelli could reckon seven consulships and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, ii. 11, and the Fasti.

[80] The Life of Alexander, in the Augustan History, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, consistent with the general history of the age; and, in some of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet, from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan History. See Mess. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the opposite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Cæsarib. p. 315) dwells with a visible satisfaction on the effeminate weakness of the *Syrian*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.

[a] See editor's note on c. viii. note 50.—S.

Establishment.

The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprise of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much less by the strength of the place than by the unskilfulness of the besiegers. The unaccustomed hardships of so many winter campaigns, at the distance of near twenty miles from home,[81] required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented the clamours of the people, by the institution of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens.[82] During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii, the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast force, both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expense of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most excessive but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. Their expectations were not disappointed. In the course of a few years, the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to near two millions sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes.[83 b] The increasing revenue of the provinces was found

and abolition of the tribute on Roman citizens.

[81] According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only an hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half, from Rome, though some outposts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Castellana, to a little spot called Isola, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

[82] See the 4th [c. 59] and 5th [c. 7] books of Livy.[a] In the Roman census, property, power, and taxation, were commensurate with each other.

[83] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3 [s. 17]. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. Plutarch. in P. Æmil. [c. 38] p. 275. [Valer. Max. iv. c. 3, § 8.]

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[a] Niebuhr contests the account of Livy, and brings forward many reasons to prove that the Roman troops received pay at a much earlier period. Hist. of Rome, vol. ii. p. 441, transl.—S.

[b] The most important part of the revenue of the Roman state under the republic was derived from the tributum, or property-tax, imposed by the constitution of Servius Tullius upon the assessed value of every kind of property belonging to Roman citizens; but as the chief part of the property of Roman citizens consisted of land, the tributum was chiefly a land-tax. This tax was abolished in B.C. 167, upon the conquest of Macedonia, as Gibbon has observed, and was never imposed again. From this time Italy was free from direct taxation, to which the provinces were subject. It has, indeed, been maintained, on the authority of Plutarch (P. Æmil. c. 38), that the tributum was revived by the triumvirs, and continued to be levied after their time, as we nowhere read of its subsequent abolition (Walter, Geschichte des Römischen Rechts, § 306); but there can be no doubt that the triumvirs only attempted to levy money for that revolutionary period by means of the tributum, and that their proceedings were never construed into a precedent. It would seem at first sight

sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of war and government, and the superfluous mass of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state.[84]

Tributes of the provinces:

History has never perhaps suffered a greater or more irreparable injury than in the loss of the curious register[a] bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expenses of the Roman empire.[85] Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the ancients as have accidentally turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half sterling.[86] Under the last and most indolent

of Asia,

[84] See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Phars. l. iii. v. 155, &c.

[85] Tacit. in Annal. i. 11. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian.

[86] Plutarch in Pompeio [c. 45], p. 642 [Frankf. ed. 1620].[b]

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as if the abolition of the tributum was a pure act of favour to Italy, and as such it might be excused, since the provinces could without oppression support the land of their rulers. But Savigny remarks that there was a decisive reason for the exemption of Italy from direct taxation in the ancient principle of the Roman constitution, that the army could only be levied and equipped by the Italian states; and consequently, as Italy alone bore the burthen of military service, which was constantly increasing with the extent of the empire, its exemption from the direct taxation of the provinces was only a fair compensation. It is true that this ancient principle was not long observed, and that in course of time the greater part of the army consisted of provincials; and as soon as this took place, the exemption of Italy from taxation was an act of favour. It was not till the time of Maximian, after the division of the empire, that a property-tax was again levied in Italy; and this was not the ancient tributum, but the system of provincial taxation, which was then introduced into Italy. See note on c. xiv. Savigny, Römische Steuerverfassung, in Vermischte Schriften, vol. ii. p. 158.

The portoria, or duties on imported goods, were abolished in Italy by a law proposed by the prætor Q. Metellus Nepos in B.C. 60, after which the only tax left in Italy was the "vicesima manumissionis," or 5 per cent. upon the value of manumitted slaves. Dion, l. xxxvii. c. 51; Cic. ad Att. ii. 16.—S.

[a] The Rationarium or Breviarium imperii. Compare, besides, Tacitus, Suet. Aug. c. ult. Dion, [lvi. c. 33] p. 832. Other emperors kept and published similar registers. See a dissertation of Dr. Wolle, de Rationario imperii Rom. Leipsig, 1773. The last book of Appian also contained the statistics of the Roman empire, but it is lost.—W.

[b] This passage of Plutarch has been interpreted in two ways. Most modern scholars suppose Plutarch to say that Pompey raised the revenue from 50 millions of denarii (or drachmæ) to 85 millions, that is, from 2,145,000*l.* to 3,654,000*l.* sterling; while Gibbon, whom Milman follows, interprets the passage to mean that Pompey added 85 millions to the ordinary revenue: but a careful examination of the passage, and the probabilities of the case, lead to the conclusion that the former opinion is the more correct.

Again, Marquardt maintains (in Becker's Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 213) that the statement in Plutarch refers to the entire vectigalia of the Roman state; but it is much more probable that the Asiatic taxes alone are meant, since we can hardly believe that the revenue of the Roman state amounted only to four millions. See Höck, Römische Geschichte, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 293. —S.

of Egypt,

of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards considerably improved by the more exact economy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Æthiopia and India.[87]

of Gaul,

Gaul was enriched by rapine,[a] as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each other in value.[88] The ten thousand Euboic or Phœnician talents, about four millions sterling,[89]

of Africa,

which vanquished Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of Rome,[90] and cannot bear the least proportion with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands and on the persons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a province.[91]

of Spain,

Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, form an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America.[92] The Phœnicians were acquainted only with the sea-coast of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena which yielded every day twenty-five thousand drachms of silver, or about three hundred thousand pounds

[87] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 798.

[88] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. He seems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.

[89] The Euboic, the Phœnician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic.[b] See Hooper on ancient weights and measures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.

[90] Polyb. l. xv. c. 18.

[91] Appian in Punicis, p. 84.

[92] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. [c. 37.] Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See Vell. Pater. i. 2.

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[a] When Cæsar had conquered Gaul, he imposed upon it a tribute of 40 millions of sesterces, or 429,000*l.* Sueton. Cæs. 25. But this tribute was soon afterwards increased; and in the time of Constantius, even after the reduction by Julian, the tribute of the Gallic provinces amounted to 4,200,000*l.* See editor's note to c. xvii. next to note 187.—S.

[b] This is not correct. The Euboic talent was the same as the old Attic talent,—that is, the talent in use before the time of Solon,—and was not double in weight to the later Attic or Solonian talent. It has been shown by Böckh that the true ratio between the Euboic and (later) Attic talent is 100 to 72, or nearly 4 to 3. See Böckh, Metrologische Untersuchungen über Gewichte, &c., Berlin, 1838; Grote's Review of Böckh's work, in the Classical Museum, vol. i.; and the articles Nummus and Pondera in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities.—S.

a year.[93] Twenty thousand pound weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Asturia, Gallicia, and Lusitania.[94]

We want both leisure and materials to pursue this curious inquiry through the many potent states that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where considerable wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected by man, if we observe the severe attention that was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility. Augustus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their excessive impositions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was a little island, or rather a rock, of the Ægean sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen.[95] of the isle of Gyarus.

From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful and scattered lights, we should be inclined to believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for the difference of times and circumstances) the general income of the Roman provinces could seldom amount to less than fifteen or twenty millions of our money;[96] and, 2ndly, That so ample a revenue must have been fully adequate to all the expenses of the moderate government instituted by Augustus, whose court was the modest family of a private senator, and whose military establishment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign invasion. Amount of the revenue.

Notwithstanding the seeming probability of both these conclusions, the latter of them at least is positively disowned by the language and conduct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine whether, on this occasion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppressor of liberty; Taxes on Roman citizens instituted by Augustus.

[93] Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.

[94] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3 [s. 21]. He mentions likewise a silver-mine in Dalmatia that yielded every day fifty pounds to the state.

[95] Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii. 69, and iv. 30. See in Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus.

[96] Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ (l. ii. c. 3) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination.

[a] We have no sure data for calculating the revenue derived from the Roman provinces. Höck reckons it at 150 millions of thalers, or 22,500,000*l.* sterling. Römische Geschichte, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 298. The expression of Vespasian at the commencement of his reign, that he needed 40,000 millions of sesterces, if the state were to stand (Sueton. Vesp. 16), does not refer to the yearly revenue, as some have supposed, but to the sum that was needed to put the finances in order after the civil wars. See Dureau de la Malle, Economie Politique des Romains, vol. ii. p. 405.—S.

whether he wished to relieve the provinces, or to impoverish the senate and the equestrian order. But no sooner had he assumed the reins of government than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. In the prosecution of this unpopular design, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs was followed by the establishment of an excise, and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

The customs.

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money must have gradually established itself. It has been already observed that, as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power, so a considerable part of it was restored to the industrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax.[97] The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy: that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the empire were treated with more indulgence than was shown to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular, commerce of Arabia and India.[98] There is still extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eastern commodities which about the time of Alexander Severus were subject to the payment of duties: cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics; a great variety of precious stones, among which the diamond was the most remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty;[99] Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, silks,

[97] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 31.[a]

[98] See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. vi. c. 28 [s. 32] l. xii. c. 18 [s. 41]). His observation, that the Indian commodities were sold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us some notion of the produce of the customs, since that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thousand pounds.

[99] The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

[a] Augustus only re-established the customs, which had existed from the earliest times of the republic, and had been suppressed by a law of Metellus but a few years previously. See note on p. 295.—S.

both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs.[100] We may observe that the use and value of those effeminate slaves gradually rose with the decline of the empire.

The excise.

II. The excise, introduced by Augustus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It seldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction, from the most considerable purchases of lands and houses, to those minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude and daily consumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occasion of clamour and discontent. An emperor well acquainted with the wants and resources of the state was obliged to declare, by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise.[101]

Tax on legacies and inheritances.

III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expenses of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the emperor suggested a new tax of five per cent. on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them that their obstinacy would oblige him to *propose* a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence.[102 c] The new im-

[100] M. Bouchaud, in his treatise de l'Impôt chez les Romains, has transcribed this catalogue from the Digest, and attempts to illustrate it by a very prolix commentary.[a]

[101] Tacit. Annal. i. 78. Two years afterwards the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one-half, but the relief was of very short duration.[b]

[102] Dion Cassius, l. lv. [c. 25] p. 799, l. lvi. [c. 28] p. 827.

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[a] In the Pandects, 39 [tit. 6, l. 16, § 7] de Publican. Compare Cicero in Verrem, ii. c. 72-74.—W.

[b] This tax, however, was abolished altogether by Caligula. Dion, lix. 9. Suet. Calig. c. 16.—S.

[c] The tax of five per cent. on all legacies and inheritances (vicesima hereditatium et legatorum) was only levied upon property bequeathed by Roman citizens, and was therefore paid chiefly by the inhabitants of Italy. It was an ingenious mode of imposing a property-tax upon the inhabitants of Italy, and was a sort of equivalent for the land-tax paid by the provinces. As the army no longer consisted exclusively of Italians, there was no reason for exempting them from direct taxation (see note, p. 295), and Augustus seems to have adopted this new tax as a substitute for the old tributum, which he would probably have hardly ventured to reimpose. A modern Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gladstone) in Great

position on legacies and inheritances was however mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value, most probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold;[103] nor could it be exacted from the nearest of kin on the father's side.[104] When the rights of nature and poverty were thus secured, it seemed reasonable that a stranger, or a distant relation, who acquired an unexpected accession of fortune, should cheerfully resign a twentieth part of it for the benefit of the state.[105]

Suited to the laws and manners.

Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove in every wealthy community, was most happily suited to the situation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills according to the dictates of reason or caprice, without any restraint from the modern fetters of entails and settlements. From various causes the partiality of paternal affection often lost its influence over the stern patriots of the commonwealth and the dissolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his son the fourth part of his estate, he removed all ground of legal complaint.[106] But a rich childless old man was a domestic tyrant, and his power increased with his years and infirmities. A servile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and consuls, courted his smiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, served his passions, and waited with impatience for his death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a most lucrative science; those who professed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively descriptions of satire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game.[107] Yet, while so many unjust and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning and subscribed by folly, a few were the result of rational esteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had so often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of an hundred and seventy thousand pounds;[108] nor do the friends of the younger Pliny seem

[103] The sum is only fixed by conjecture.

[104] As the Roman law subsisted for many ages, the *Cognati*, or relations on the mother's side, were not called to the succession. This harsh institution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally abolished by Justinian.

[105] Plin. Panegyric. c. 37.

[106] See Heineccius in the Antiquit. Juris Romani, l. ii.

[107] Horat. l. ii. Sat. v. [v. 23, *sqq.*] Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. ii. Epist. 20.

[108] Cicero in Philip. ii. c. 16.

Britain, has, in like manner, imposed a tax upon successions, in order to obviate the necessity, and thus avert the unpopularity, of a property-tax. All inheritances below 100,000 sesterces, and the nearest relations by blood, were exempt from this tax; but in consequence of the large fortunes of the Roman nobles, and of the prevalence of celibacy among them, it must have yielded a large annual revenue. See Bachofen, Die Erbschaftssteuer, &c., in Ausgewählte Lehren des Römischen Civilrechts, Bonn, 1848.—S.

to have been less generous to that amiable orator.[109] Whatever was the motive of the testator, the treasury claimed, without distinction, the twentieth part of his estate: and in the course of two or three generations the whole property of the subject must have gradually passed through the coffers of the state.

In the first and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a desire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulse of benevolence, conceived a wish of abolishing the oppression of the customs and excise. The wisest senators applauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him from the execution of a design which would have dissolved the strength and resources of the republic.[110] Had it indeed been possible to realize this dream of fancy, such princes as Trajan and the Antonines would surely have embraced with ardour the glorious opportunity of conferring so signal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildness and precision of their laws ascertained the rule and measure of taxation, and protected the subject of every rank against arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the insolent vexation of the farmers of the revenue.[111] For it is somewhat singular, that, in every age, the best and wisest of the Roman governors persevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at least of the excise and customs.[112] Regulations of the emperors.

The sentiments, and indeed the situation of Caracalla, were very different from those of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averse, to the welfare of his people, he found himself under the necessity of gratifying the insatiate avarice which he had excited in the army. Of the several impositions introduced by Augustus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the most fruitful as well as the most comprehensive. As its influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increased with the gradual extension of the ROMAN CITY. The new citizens, though charged on equal terms[113] with the payment of new taxes which had not affected them as subjects, derived an ample compensation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair prospect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their Edict of Caracalla.

[109] See his epistles. Every such will gave him an occasion of displaying his reverence to the dead, and his justice to the living. He reconciled both in his behaviour to a son who had been disinherited by his mother (v. 1).

[110] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 50. Esprit des Loix, l. xiii. c. 19.

[111] See Pliny's Panegyric, the Augustan History, and Burman. de Vectigal. passim.

[112] The tributes (properly so called) were not farmed; since the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

[113] The situation of the new citizens is minutely described by Pliny (Panegyric, c. 37, 38, 39). Trajan published a law very much in their favour.

ambition. But the favour which implied a distinction was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume the vain title and the real obligations of Roman citizens.[a] Nor was the rapacious son of Severus contented with such a measure of taxation as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was restored after his death) he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre.[114]

The freedom of the city given to all the provincials, for the purpose of taxation.

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended son. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the same time, levied in the provinces. It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them in a great measure from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession.[115] It is impossible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and in the succeeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital.[b]

Temporary reduction of the tribute.

[114] Dion, l. lxxvii. [c. 9] p. 1294.

[115] He who paid ten *nummi*, the usual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hist. August. p. 127 [Lampr. Alex. Sev. c. 39], with the commentary of Salmasius.

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[a] Some writers, whom Wenck has followed, attribute to M. Aurelius the edict which conferred the citizenship upon the provincials. But there is no doubt that the statement in the text is correct, since the contemporary, Dion, expressly assigns the edict to Caracalla, and the other authorities do not deserve notice in comparison with him.—S.

[b] Gibbon has omitted to mention the important change introduced during the first two centuries of the empire in the system of taxation in the provinces. The following is a brief account of this change, taken from Savigny's admirable essay quoted above:—

In the time of the republic the system of taxation differed in the various provinces, partly in consequence of the different circumstances attending their subjugation, and partly because it was found more convenient and advantageous to preserve the system of taxation which was in existence before the Roman conquest. All provinces, however, except Sicily, paid either a fixed land-tax (*vectigal stipendiarium*), or variable duties, such as tithes or other portion of the produce (Cic. Verr. iii. 6); but, without any respect to these differences, all the land in the provinces bore the general name of "agri vectigales," which consequently was the name for all land that paid taxes, since Italy, as we have already seen, was exempt. At the very commencement of the imperial government an attempt was

As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen, by equal steps, through the regular succession of civil and military honours.[118] To their influence and example we may partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the Imperial history.

Consequences of the universal freedom of Rome.

But when the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the separation of professions gradually succeeded to the distinction of ranks. The more polished citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as lawyers and magistrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peasants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp, no science but that of war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners, and desperate resolutions, they sometimes guarded, but much oftener subverted, the throne of the emperors.

[118] See the lives of Agricola, Vespasian, Trajan, Severus and his three competitors; and indeed of all the eminent men of those times.

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made to introduce a uniform system of taxation in the provinces, by abolishing the variable duties (tithes, &c.), and substituting a land-tax in their place. With this view a census or register of property was taken by order of Augustus in several of the provinces (Liv. Epit. 134; Dion, lii. 22; St. Luke, c. 2); and indeed we might conclude from some other statements that the land-tax had been introduced into all the provinces by Augustus, if it were not for a passage in Hyginus, from which we learn that a part of the produce was still paid in the time of Trajan (Hyginus, de Limitibus Constituendis, p. 198, ed. Goesius, p. 205, ed. Lachmann.) It appears, however, from this passage, that some provinces, which had formerly paid part of their produce, then paid a land-tax. But it was under M. Aurelius that the land-tax was at length established in all the provinces, and the new system of taxation fully completed. This may be inferred from the altered use of the words relating to taxation. Gaius says (iii. § 21) that all provincial land was called either *stipendiaria* or *tributaria*, which only differed in name, since the former applied to land in the provinces of the Roman people, and the latter to land in the provinces of the Cæsar; but he does not use the old expression, *agers censuique*. Moreover, we do not find in the classical jurists any mention of tithes or other variable duties.

Besides the land-tax there was also a poll-tax (tributum capitis, Dig. 50, tit. 15, l. 8, § 7; Tertull. Apolog. c. 13) in the provinces; but of the latter we have not any exact information. The towns in the provinces which possessed the *jus Italicum* were free from the above-mentioned taxes. The term indicates that these towns possessed the privileges enjoyed by the towns in Italy, one of the most important of which was exemption from the land and poll tax. This is proved by a striking passage in the Digest (50, tit. 15, l. 8, § 7):—"D. Vespasianus Cæsar eaues colonos fecit, non adjecto ut et juris Italici essent: sed tributum his remisit capitis. Sed D. Titus etiam solum immune factum interpretatus est" that is, Vespasian gave the town the right of a colony without the *jus Italicum*, though he gave it one of the privileges of the *jus Italicum* in exempting it from the poll-tax; but Titus bestowed upon it the other privilege of the *jus Italicum*, namely, exemption from the land-tax.—S.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ELEVATION AND TYRANNY OF MAXIMIN — REBELLION IN AFRICA AND ITALY UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE — CIVIL WARS AND SEDITIONS — VIOLENT DEATHS OF MAXIMIN AND HIS SON, OF MAXIMUS AND BALBINUS, AND OF THE THREE GORDIANS — USURPATION AND SECULAR GAMES OF PHILIP.

The various government ridicule.

Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself, and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

Real and solid advantages of hereditary succession.

In the cool shade of retirement we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us that in a large society the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest or to the most numerous part of the people. The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens; but the temper of soldiers, habituated at once to violence and to slavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal or even a civil constitution. Justice, humanity, or political wisdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themselves to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their esteem, and liberality will purchase their suffrage; but the first of these merits is often lodged in the most savage breasts; the latter can only exert itself at the expense of the public; and both may be turned against the possessor of the throne by the ambition of a daring rival.

The superior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea we owe the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies. To the defect of it we must attribute the frequent civil wars through which an Asiatic despot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet, even in the East, the sphere of contention is usually limited to the princes of the reigning house, and, as soon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren by the sword and the bow-string, he no longer entertains any jealousy of his meaner subjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the senate had sunk into contempt, was a vast scene of confusion.[1] The royal and even noble families of the provinces had long since been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had successively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæsars; and whilst those princes were shackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and disappointed by the repeated failure of their posterity, it was impossible that any idea of hereditary succession should have taken root in the minds of their subjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one assumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were set loose from the salutary restraints of law and prejudice, and the meanest of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raised by valour and fortune to a rank in the army, in which a single crime would enable him to wrest the sceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular master. After the murder of Alexander Severus and the elevation of Maximin, no emperor could think himself safe upon the throne, and every barbarian peasant of the frontier might aspire to that august but dangerous station.

Want of it in the Roman empire productive of the greatest calamities.

About thirty-two years before that event, the emperor Severus, returning from an eastern expedition, halted in Thrace, to celebrate, with military games, the birthday of his younger son, Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold their sovereign, and a young barbarian of gigantic stature earnestly solicited, in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wrestling. As the pride of discipline would have been disgraced in the overthrow of a Roman soldier by a Thracian peasant, he was

Birth and fortunes of Maximin.

[1] There had been no example of three successive generations on the throne; only three instances of sons who succeeded their fathers. The marriages of the Cæsars (notwithstanding the permission, and the frequent practice, of divorces) were generally unfruitful.

matched with the stoutest followers of the camp, sixteen of whom he successively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by some trifling gifts, and a permission to enlist in the troops. The next day the happy barbarian was distinguished above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the fashion of his country. As soon as he perceived that he had attracted the emperor's notice, he instantly ran up to his horse, and followed him on foot, without the least appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thracian," said Severus with astonishment, "art thou disposed to wrestle after thy race?" "Most willingly, Sir," replied the unwearied youth; and, almost in a breath, overthrew seven of the strongest soldiers in the army. A gold collar was the prize of his matchless vigour and activity, and he was immediately appointed to serve in the horse-guards who always attended on the person of the sovereign.[2]

His military service and honours.

Maximin, for that was his name, though born on the territories of the empire, descended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a Goth, and his mother of the nation of the Alani. He displayed on every occasion a valour equal to his strength, and his native fierceness was soon tempered or disguised by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his son, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and esteem of both those princes: the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to serve under the assassin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate insults of Elagabalus. On the accession of Alexander he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a station useful to the service and honourable to himself. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, soon became, under his care, the best disciplined of the whole army. With the general applause of the soldiers, who bestowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was successively promoted to the first military command;[3] and had not he still retained too much of his savage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own sister in marriage to the son of Maximin.[4]

Conspiracy of Maximin.

Instead of securing his fidelity, these favours served only to inflame the ambition of the Thracian peasant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit as long as he was constrained to acknowledge a superior. Though a stranger to real

[2] Hist. August. p. 138. [Capitol. Maxim. c. 1, *seqq.*]

[3] Hist. August. p. 140 [id. ib. c. 6]. Herodian, l. vi. [c. 8] p. 223. Aurelius Victor. By comparing these authors, it should seem that Maximin had the particular command of the Tribullian horse, with the general commission of disciplining the recruits of the whole army. His biographer ought to have marked with more care his exploits, and the successive steps of his military promotions.

[4] See the original letter of Alexander Severus, Hist. August. p. 149. [Capitol. Maximin. jun. c. 8.]

wisdom, he was not devoid of a selfish cunning, which showed him that the emperor had lost the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their discontent to his own advantage. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of princes, and to accuse even their virtues by artfully confounding them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity. The troops listened with pleasure to the emissaries of Maximin. They blushed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had supported the vexatious discipline imposed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid slave of his mother and of the senate. It was time, they cried, to cast away that useless phantom of the civil power, and to elect for their prince and general a real soldier, educated in camps, exercised in war, who would assert the glory and distribute among his companions the treasures of the empire. A great army was at that time assembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himself, who, almost immediately after his return from the East, had been obliged to march against the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intrusted to Maximin. One day, as he entered the field of exercise, the troops, either from a sudden impulse or a formed conspiracy, saluted him emperor, silenced by their loud acclamations his faint and hypocritical refusal, and hastened to consummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

The circumstances of his death are variously related. The writers who suppose that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude and ambition of Maximin affirm that, after taking a frugal repast in the sight of the army, he retired to sleep, and that about the seventh hour of the day a part of his own guards broke into the Imperial tent, and, with many wounds, assassinated their virtuous and unsuspecting prince.[3] If we credit another, and indeed a more probable account, Maximin was invested with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the distance of several miles from the head-quarters, and he trusted for success rather to the secret wishes than to the public declarations of the great army. Alexander had sufficient time to awaken a faint sense of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant professions of fidelity quickly vanished on the appearance of Maximin, who declared himself the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimously acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The son of Mamæa, betrayed and deserted,

A.D. 235, March 19. Murder of Alexander Severus.

[3] Hist. August. p. 135. [Lampr. Alex. Severus, c. 61.] I have softened some of the most improbable circumstances of this wretched biographer. From this ill-worded narration it should seem that, the prince's buffoon having accidentally entered the tent and awakened the slumbering monarch, the fear of punishment urged him to persuade the disaffected soldiers to commit the murder.

withdrew into his tent, desirous at least to conceal his approaching fate from the insults of the multitude. He was soon followed by a tribune and some centurions, the ministers of death; but instead of receiving with manly resolution the inevitable stroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties disgraced the last moments of his life, and converted into contempt some portion of the just pity which his innocence and misfortunes must inspire. His mother Mamæa, whose pride and avarice he loudly accused as the cause of his ruin, perished with her son. The most faithful of his friends were sacrificed to the first fury of the soldiers. Others were reserved for the more deliberate cruelty of the usurper, and those who experienced the mildest treatment were stripped of their employments and ignominiously driven from the court and army.[6]

Tyranny of Maximin.

The former tyrants, Caligula and Nero, Commodus and Caracalla, were all dissolute and unexperienced youths,[7] educated in the purple, and corrupted by the pride of empire, the lu[illegible] of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty [illegible] was derived from a different source, the fear of conte[illegible] he depended on the attachment of the soldiers, who [illegible] virtues like their own, he was conscious that his mean and [illegible] origin, his savage appearance, and his total ignorance of the [illegible] institutions of civil life,[8] formed a very unfavourable contrast [illegible] the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembe[illegible] that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the door [illegible] the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the insolence of their slaves. He recollected too the friendship of a few who had relieved his poverty, and assisted his rising hopes. But those who had spurned, and those who had protected the Thracian, were guilty of the same crime, the knowledge of his original obscurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of several of his benefactors, Maximin published, in characters of blood, the indelible history of his baseness and ingratitude.[9]

The dark and sanguinary soul of the tyrant was open to every suspicion against those among his subjects who were the most distinguished by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed with

[6] Herodian, l. vi. [c. 8 and 9] p. 223-227.

[7] Caligula, the eldest of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than seventeen.

[8] It appears that he was totally ignorant of the Greek language, which, from its universal use in conversation and letters, was an essential part of every liberal education.

[9] Hist. August. p. 141 [Capitol. Maxim. c. 8]. Herodian, l. vii. [c. 1] p. 237. The latter of these historians has been most unjustly censured for sparing the vices of Maximin.

the sound of treason: his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conspiracy against his life was either discovered or imagined, and Magnus, a consular senator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witness, without a trial, and without an opportunity of defence, Magnus, with four thousand of his supposed accomplices, were put to death. Italy and the whole empire were infested with innumerable spies and informers. On the slightest accusation, the first of the Roman nobles, who had governed provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned with the consular and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages, and hurried away to the emperor's presence. Confiscation, exile, or simple death, were esteemed uncommon instances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate sufferers he ordered to be sewed up in the hides of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign he disdained to visit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occasionally removed from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Danube, was the seat of his stern despotism, which trampled on every principle of law and justice, and was supported by the avowed power of the sword.[*] No man of noble birth, elegant accomplishments, or knowledge of civil business, was suffered near his person; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of those ancient chiefs of slaves and gladiators, whose savage power had left a deep impression of terror and detestation.[11]

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illustrious senators, or even to the bold adventurers who in the court, the camp, or the provinces, expose themselves to the caprice of fortune, the great body of the people viewed their sufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure. But the tyrant's avarice, stimulated by the insatiate desires of the soldiers, at length attacked the public property. Every city of the empire was possessed of an independent revenue, destined to purchase corn for the multitude, and to supply the expenses of the games and entertainments. By a single act of authority, the whole mass of wealth was at once confiscated for the use of the

Oppression of the people.

[10] The wife of Maximin, by insinuating wise counsels with female gentleness, sometimes brought back the tyrant to the way of truth and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xiv. c. 1, where he alludes to the fact which he had more fully related under the reign of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals that Paulina was the name of this benevolent empress; and from the title of *Diva*, that she died before Maximin. (Vaillant. ad loc. cit. Ammian.) Spanheim de U. et P. N. tom. ii. p. 300.

[11] He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hist. August. p. 141. [Capitol. Maxim. c. 9.]

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[*] If we may believe Syncellus [a. A. M. 5728] and Zonaras [xii. 16], it was Maximin himself who ordered her death.—G.

Imperial treasury. The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold and silver, and the statues of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. These impious orders could not be executed without tumults and massacres, as in many places the people chose rather to die in the defence of their altars than to behold in the midst of peace their cities exposed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The soldiers themselves, among whom this sacrilegious plunder was distributed, received it with a blush; and hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the just reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring vengeance on the common enemy of human kind; and at length, by an act of private oppression, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion against him.[12]

Revolt in Africa, A.D. 237, April. [A.D. 238, February.]

The procurator of Africa was a servant worthy of such a master, who considered the fines and confiscations of the rich as one of the most fruitful branches of the imperial revenue. An iniquitous sentence had been pronounced against some opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have stripped them of far the greater part of their patrimony. In this extremity, a resolution that must either complete or prevent their ruin was dictated by despair. A respite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the rapacious treasurer, was employed in collecting from their estates a great number of slaves and peasants blindly devoted to the commands of their lords, and armed with the rude weapons of clubs and axes. The leaders of the conspiracy, as soon as were admitted to the audience of the procurator, stabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the assistance of their tumultuary train, seized on the little town of Thysdrus,[13] and erected the standard of rebellion against the sovereign of the Roman empire. They rested their hopes on the hatred of mankind against Maximin, and they judiciously resolved to oppose to that detested tyrant an emperor whose mild virtues had already acquired the love and esteem of the Romans, and whose authority over the province would give weight and stability to the enterprise. Gordianus, their proconsul, and the object of their choice, refused, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous honour, and begged, with tears, that they would suffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without staining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces com-

[12] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 3 and 4] p. 238. Zosim. l. i. [c. 13. p. 18] p. 15.

[13] In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the south of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably by the Gordians, with the title of colony, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is still in a very perfect state. See Itinerar. Wesseling, p. 59; and Shaw's Travels, p. 117.

pelled him to accept the Imperial purple, his only refuge indeed against the jealous cruelty of Maximin; since, according to the reasoning of tyrants, those who have been esteemed worthy of the throne deserve death, and those who deliberate have already rebelled.[14]

Character and elevation of the two Gordians.

The family of Gordianus was one of the most illustrious of the Roman senate. On the father's side he was descended from the Gracchi; on his mother's, from the emperor Trajan. A great estate enabled him to support the dignity of his birth, and in the enjoyment of it he displayed an elegant taste and beneficent disposition. The palace in Rome formerly inhabited by the great Pompey had been, during several generations, in the possession of Gordian's family.[15] It was distinguished by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Præneste was celebrated for baths of singular beauty and extent, for three stately rooms of an hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, supported by two hundred columns of the four most curious and costly sorts of marble.[16] The public shows exhibited at his expense, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beasts and gladiators,[17] seem to surpass the fortune of a subject; and whilst the liberality of other magistrates was confined to a few solemn festivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was ædile, every month in the year, and extended, during his consulship, to the principal cities of Italy. He was twice elevated to the last-mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he possessed the uncommon talent of acquiring the esteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealousy of tyrants. His long life was innocently spent in the study of letters and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconsul of Africa by the voice of

[14] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 4 and 5] p. 239. Hist. August. p. 153. [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 7 and 8.]

[15] Hist. Aug. p. 152. [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 3.] The celebrated house of Pompey in Carinæ was usurped by Marc Antony, and consequently became, after the Triumvir's death, a part of the Imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed and even encouraged the rich senators to purchase those magnificent and useless palaces (Plin. Panegyric. c. 50); and it may seem probable, that, on this occasion, Pompey's house came into the possession of Gordian's great-grandfather.

[16] The Claudian, the Numidian, the Carystian, and the Synnadian. The colours of Roman marbles have been faintly described and imperfectly distinguished. It appears, however, that the Carystian was a sea-green, and that the marble of Synnada was white mixed with oval spots of purple. See Salmasius ad Hist. August. p. 164.

[17] Hist. August. p. 151, 152. [Capitol. Gordiani, 3 and 4.] He sometimes gave five hundred pair of gladiators, never less than one hundred and fifty. He once gave for the use of the Circus one hundred Sicilian and as many Cappadocian horses. The animals designed for hunting were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, stags, elks, wild asses, &c. Elephants and lions seem to have been appropriated to Imperial magnificence.

the senate and the approbation of Alexander,[18] he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces.[a] As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the administration of his worthy representative; after the barbarous Maximin had usurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miseries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above fourscore years old; a last and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whose virtues he revived in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconsul, his son, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewise declared emperor. His manners were less pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than for ostentation.[19] The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian the resemblance of Scipio Africanus,[b] recollected with pleasure that his mother was the granddaughter of Antoninus Pius, and rested the public hope on those latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

They solicit the confirmation of their authority.

As soon as the Gordians had appeased the first tumult of a popular election they removed their court to Carthage. The ambassadors were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, since the visit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majesty of a Roman emperor. But these vain acclamations neither strengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as interest, to solicit the approbation of the senate; and a deputation of the noblest provincials was sent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and justify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long suffered with patience, were at length resolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modest and respectful, excusing the necessity which had obliged them to accept the Imperial title, but submit-

[18] See the original letter, in the Augustan History, p. 152 [Capitol. Gordian. c. 5], which at once shows Alexander's respect for the authority of the senate, and his esteem for the proconsul appointed by that assembly.

[19] By each of his concubines the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though less numerous, were by no means contemptible.

[a] Herodian expressly says that he had *lin. c.* 5.—S.

administered many provinces, *lin.* vii. 5.

[b] Not the personal likeness, but the family descent from the Scipios.—W.

W. This is also mentioned by Capito

ting their election and their fate to the supreme judgment of the senate.[20]

The senate ratifies the election of the Gordians;

The inclinations of the senate were neither doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the most illustrious houses of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependents in that assembly, their merit had acquired many friends. Their mild administration opened the flattering prospect of the restoration, not only of the civil but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had first obliged the senate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian peasant,[21] now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to assert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximin towards the senate was declared and implacable; the tamest submission had not appeased his fury, the most cautious innocence would not remove his suspicions; and even the care of their own safety urged them to share the fortune of an enterprise, of which (if unsuccessful) they were sure to be the first victims. These considerations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the consuls and the magistrates. As soon as their resolution was decided they convoked in the temple of Castor the whole body of the senate, according to an ancient form of secrecy,[22] calculated to awaken their attention and to conceal their decrees. "Conscript fathers," said the consul Syllanus, "the two "Gordians, both of consular dignity, the one your proconsul, the "other your lieutenant, have been declared emperors by the general "consent of Africa. Let us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to the youth of Thysdrus; let us return thanks to the faithful "people of Carthage, our generous deliverers from an horrid monster "—Why do you hear me thus coolly, thus timidly? Why do you "cast those anxious looks on each other? why hesitate? Maximin "is a public enemy! may his enmity soon expire with him, and may "we long enjoy the prudence and felicity of Gordian the father, the "valour and constancy of Gordian the son!"[23] The noble ardour of the consul revived the languid spirit of the senate. By an

[20] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 6] p. 243. Hist. August. p. 144. [Capitol. Maxim. c. 14.]

[21] Quod tamen patres, dum periculosum existimant inermes armato resistere, approbaverunt.—*Aurelius Victor* [de Cæsar. c. 25].

[22] Even the servants of the house, the scribes, &c., were excluded, and their office was filled by the senators themselves. We are obliged to the Augustan History, p. 157, for preserving this curious example of the old discipline of the commonwealth. [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 12.]

[23] This spirited speech, translated from the Augustan historian, p. 156 [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 11], seems transcribed by him from the original registers of the senate.

unanimous decree the election of the Gordians was ratified; Maximin, his son, and his adherents were pronounced enemies of their country; and liberal rewards were offered to whomsoever had the courage and good fortune to destroy them.

and declares Maximin a public enemy.

During the emperor's absence a detachment of the Prætorian guards remained at Rome to protect, or rather to command, the capital. The præfect Vitalianus had signalised his fidelity to Maximin by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented, the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could rescue the authority of the senate, and the lives of the senators, from a state of danger and suspense. Before their resolves had transpired, a quæstor and some tribunes were commissioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldness and success; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the streets, proclaiming to the people and the soldiers the news of the happy revolution. The enthusiasm of liberty was seconded by the promise of a large donative in lands and money; the statues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with transport, the authority of the two Gordians and the senate;[24] and the example of Rome was followed by the rest of Italy.

Assumes the command of Rome and Italy;

A new spirit had arisen in that assembly, whose long patience had been insulted by wanton despotism and military licence. The senate assumed the reins of government, and, with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cause of freedom. Among the consular senators, recommended by their merit and services to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was easy to select twenty, not unequal to the command of an army and the conduct of a war. To these was the defence of Italy intrusted. Each was appointed to act in his respective department, authorised to enrol and discipline the Italian youth, and instructed to fortify the ports and highways against the impending invasion of Maximin. A number of deputies, chosen from the most illustrious of the senatorian and equestrian orders, were despatched at the same time to the governors of the several provinces, earnestly conjuring them to fly to the assistance of their country, and to remind the nations of their ancient ties of friendship with the Roman senate and people. The general respect with which these deputies were received, and the zeal of Italy and the provinces in favour of the senate, sufficiently prove that the subjects of Maximin were reduced to that uncommon distress, in which the body of the people has more to fear from

and prepares for a civil war.

[24] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 6 and 7] p. 244.

oppression than from resistance. The consciousness of that melancholy truth inspires a degree of persevering fury seldom to be found in those civil wars which are artificially supported for the benefit of a few factious and designing leaders.[25]

Defeat and death of the two Gordians, A.D. 237, July 3. [A.D. 238, March.]

For, while the cause of the Gordians was embraced with such diffusive ardour, the Gordians themselves were no more. The feeble court of Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of Capelianus, governor of Mauritania, who, with a small band of veterans and a fierce host of barbarians, attacked a faithful but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian sallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undisciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His useless valour served only to procure him an honourable death in the field of battle. His aged father, whose reign had not exceeded thirty-six days, put an end to his life on the first news of the defeat. Carthage, destitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was exposed to the rapacious cruelty of a slave, obliged to satisfy his unrelenting master with a large account of blood and treasure.[26]

Election of Maximus and Balbinus by the senate, July 9. [March.]

The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with just but unexpected terror. The senate, convoked in the temple of Concord, affected to transact the common business of the day; and seemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the consideration of their own and the public danger. A silent consternation prevailed on the assembly, till a senator, of the name and family of Trajan, awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He represented to them that the choice of cautious dilatory measures had been long since out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature and exasperated by injuries, was advancing towards Italy at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative was either to meet him bravely in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reserved for unsuccessful rebellion. "We have lost," continued he, "two excel-
"lent princes; but, unless we desert ourselves, the hopes of the
"republic have not perished with the Gordians. Many are the
"senators whose virtues have deserved, and whose abilities would
"sustain, the Imperial dignity. Let us elect two emperors, one of

[25] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 7] p. 247, l. viii. [c. 6] p. 277. Hist. August. p. 156–158. [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 13, *sqq.*]

[26] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 9] p. 254. Hist. August. p. 150–160. [Capitol. Gordiani, c. 15, *sq.*] We may observe that one month and six days for the reign of Gordian is a just correction of Casaubon and Panvinius, instead of the absurd reading of one year and six months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zosimus relates, l. i. [c. 16, p. 20] p. 17, that the two Gordians perished by a tempest in the midst of their navigation. A strange ignorance of history, or a strange abuse of metaphors!

"whom may conduct the war against the public enemy, whilst his "colleague remains at Rome to direct the civil administration. I "cheerfully expose myself to the danger and envy of the nomination, "and give my vote in favour of Maximus and Balbinus. Ratify my "choice, conscript fathers, or appoint, in their place, others more "worthy of the empire." The general apprehension silenced the whispers of jealousy; the merit of the candidates was universally acknowledged; and the house resounded with the sincere acclamations of "Long life and victory to the emperors Maximus and "Balbinus. You are happy in the judgment of the senate; may "the republic be happy under your administration!"[27]

Their characters.

The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors justified the most sanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents seemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of distinguished fame, and a wise magistrate, who had exercised with innocence and applause the civil jurisdiction in almost all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble,[28] his fortune affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him the love of pleasure was corrected by a sense of dignity; nor had the habits of ease deprived him of a capacity for business. The mind of Maximus was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raised himself from the meanest origin to the first employments of the state and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the austerity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his justice whilst he was præfect of the city, commanded the esteem of a people whose affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been consuls (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the senate; and, since the one was sixty and the other seventy-four years old,[29] they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

[27] See the Augustan History, p. 166 [Capitol. Maxim. et Balbin. c. 2], from the registers of the senate; the date is confessedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it.

[28] He was descended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted son of Theophanes the Greek historian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by the favour of Pompey, and preserved it by the eloquence of Cicero (see Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendship of Cæsar (to whom he rendered the most important secret services in the civil war) raised him to the consulship and the pontificate, honours never yet possessed by a stranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Garamantes. See Dictionnaire de Bayle, au mot *Balbus*, where he distinguishes the several persons of that name, and rectifies, with his usual accuracy, the mistakes of former writers concerning them.

[29] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 17, p. 579] p. 622. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a modern Greek, so grossly ignorant of the history of the third century that he creates several imaginary emperors, and confounds those who really existed.

After the senate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the consular and tribunitian powers, the title of Fathers of their country, and the joint office of Supreme Pontiff, they ascended to the Capitol to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome.[30] The solemn rites of sacrifice were disturbed by a sedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they sufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increasing numbers surrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obstinate clamours they asserted their inherent right of consenting to the election of their sovereign; and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, besides the two emperors chosen by the senate, a third should be added of the family of the Gordians, as a just return of gratitude to those princes who had sacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city-guards and the youth of the equestrian order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the seditious multitude. The multitude, armed with sticks and stones, drove them back into the Capitol. It is prudent to yield when the contest, whatever may be the issue of it, must be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandson of the elder and nephew[a] of the younger Gordian, was produced to the people, invested with the ornaments and title of Cæsar. The tumult was appeased by this easy condescension; and the two emperors, as soon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy against the common enemy.

Tumult at Rome. The younger Gordian is declared Cæsar.

Whilst in Rome and Africa revolutions succeeded each other with such amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the most furious passions. He is said to have received the news of the rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the senate against him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beast; which, as it could not discharge itself on the distant senate, threatened the life of his son, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his person. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians was quickly followed by the assurance that the senate, laying aside all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had substituted in their room two emperors, with whose merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only consolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms.

Maximin prepares to attack the senate and their emperors.

[30] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 10] p. 256, supposes that the senate was at first convoked in the Capitol, and is very eloquent on the occasion. The Augustan History, p. 166 [Capitol. Maxim. et Balb. c. 3], seems much more authentic.

[a] According to some, the son.—G.

The strength of the legions had been assembled by Alexander from all parts of the empire. Three successful campaigns against the Germans and the Sarmatians had raised their fame, confirmed their discipline, and even increased their numbers by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been spent in war, and the candid severity of history cannot refuse him the valour of a soldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general.[31] It might naturally be expected that a prince of such a character, instead of suffering the rebellion to gain stability by delay, should immediately have marched from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tiber, and that his victorious army, instigated by contempt for the senate, and eager to gather the spoils of Italy, should have burned with impatience to finish the easy and lucrative conquest. Yet, as far as we can trust to the obscure chronology of that period,[32] it appears that the operations of some foreign war deferred the Italian expedition till the ensuing spring. From the prudent conduct of Maximin we may learn that the savage features of his character have been exaggerated by the pencil of party; that his passions, however impetuous, submitted to the force of reason; and that the barbarian possessed something of the generous spirit of Sylla, who

[31] In Herodian, l. vii. [c. 8] p. 249, and in the Augustan History [Capitol. Maximini, c. 18, and Gordiani, c. 14], we have three several orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome: M. de Tillemont has very justly observed that they neither agree with each other nor with truth. Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 799.

[32] The carelessness of the writers of that age leaves us in a singular perplexity. 1. We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. Herodian, l. viii. [c. 8] p. 285. The authority of Censorinus (de Die Natali, c. 18) enables us to fix those games with certainty to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2. The election of Gordian by the senate is fixed with equal certainty to the 27th of May; but we are at a loss to discover whether it was in the same or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintain the two opposite opinions, bring into the field a desultory troop of authorities, conjectures, and probabilities. The one seems to draw out, the other to contract, the series of events between those periods, more than can be well reconciled to reason and history. Yet it is necessary to choose between them.[a]

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[a] The evidence of coins, which have been examined with great accuracy by Eckhel, shows that the interval between the elevation of the Gordians and the deaths of Maximus and Balbinus could not have exceeded five months, and consequently that these events must be placed in the year 238. Eckhel places them between the beginning of March and the end of July; but Clinton supposes that the deaths of Maximus and Balbinus took place about forty days earlier than the date of Eckhel, since the Cod. Justin. names Gordian III. at June 22nd; and it is expressly stated (Herodian, vii. 4), that the Gordians were proclaimed after the third year of Maximin was completed (the fourth year commencing on Feb. 22nd). Clinton arranges in the following manner the events of the memorable year. The Gordians were proclaimed in February, and were slain in March; Maximus and Balbinus were appointed in March; Maximin reached Aquileia in *April*, and was slain in the beginning of May; Maximus and Balbinus were slain, and Gordian III. proclaimed, about the middle of June. All the events might happen between Feb. 10 and June 15. See Clinton, Fasti Romani, vol. i. p. 252; Eckhel, vol. vii. p. 295.—S.

subdued the enemies of Rome before he suffered himself to revenge his private injuries.[33]

When the troops of Maximin, advancing in excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian Alps, they were terrified by the silence and desolation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The villages and open towns had been abandoned on their approach by the inhabitants, the cattle was driven away, the provisions removed or destroyed, the bridges broke down, nor was anything left which could afford either shelter or subsistence to an invader. Such had been the wise orders of the generals of the senate, whose design was to protract the war, to ruin the army of Maximin by the slow operation of famine, and to consume his strength in the sieges of the principal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully stored with men and provisions from the deserted country. Aquileia received and withstood the first shock of the invasion. The streams that issue from the head of the Hadriatic gulf, swelled by the melting of the winter snows,[34] opposed an unexpected obstacle to the arms of Maximin. At length, on a singular bridge, constructed, with art and difficulty, of large hogsheads, he transported his army to the opposite bank, rooted up the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of Aquileia, demolished the suburbs, and employed the timber of the buildings in the engines and towers with which on every side he attacked the city. The walls, fallen to decay during the security of a long peace, had been hastily repaired on this sudden emergency: but the firmest defence of Aquileia consisted in the constancy of the citizens; all ranks of whom, instead of being dismayed, were animated by the extreme danger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelenting temper. Their courage was supported and directed by Crispinus and Menophilus, two of the twenty lieutenants of the senate, who, with a small body of regular troops, had thrown themselves into the besieged place. The army of Maximin was repulsed in repeated attacks, his machines destroyed by showers of artificial fire; and the generous

Marches into Italy. A.D. 238, February.

Siege of Aquileia.

[33] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 24. The president de Montesquieu (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expresses the sentiments of the dictator in a spirited and even a sublime manner.

[34] Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 294) thinks the melting of the snows suits better with the months of June or July than with that of February. The opinion of a man who passed his life between the Alps and the Apennines is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I observe, 1. That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin version, and not in the Greek text of Herodian. 2. That the vicissitudes of suns and rains to which the soldiers of Maximin were exposed (Herodian, l. viii. [c. 5] p. 277), denotes the spring rather than the summer. We may observe likewise, that these several streams, as they melted into one, composed the Timavus, so poetically (in every sense of the word) described by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the east of Aquileia. See Cluver. Italia Antiqua, tom. i. p. 189, &c.

enthusiasm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of success by the opinion that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in person in the defence of his distressed worshippers.[35]

Conduct of Maximus.

The emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as Ravenna to secure that important place and to hasten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reason and policy. He was too sensible that a single town could not resist the persevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded lest the enemy, tired with the obstinate resistance of Aquileia, should on a sudden relinquish the fruitless siege and march directly towards Rome. The fate of the empire and the cause of freedom must then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppose to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous but enervated youth of Italy, and a body of German auxiliaries, on whose firmness, in the hour of trial, it was dangerous to depend. In the midst of these just alarms, the stroke of domestic conspiracy punished the crimes of Maximin and delivered Rome and the senate from the calamities that would surely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

Murder of Maximin and his son, A.D. 238, April. [May.]

The people of Aquileia had scarcely experienced any of the common miseries of a siege; their magazines were plentifully supplied, and several fountains within the walls assured them of an inexhaustible resource of fresh water. The soldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, exposed to the inclemency of the season, the contagion of disease, and the horrors of famine. The open country was ruined, the rivers filled with the slain and polluted with blood. A spirit of despair and disaffection began to diffuse itself among the troops; and as they were cut off from all intelligence, they easily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cause of the senate, and that they were left as devoted victims to perish under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exasperated by disappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, instead of striking terror, inspired hatred and a just desire of revenge. A party of Prætorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the sentence of the senate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was slain in his tent with his son (whom he had associated to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the præfect, and the principal ministers of his tyranny.[36]

[35] Herodian, l. viii. [c. 3] p. 272. The Celtic deity was supposed to be Apollo, and received under that name the thanks of the senate. A temple was likewise built to Venus the Bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for the military engines.

[36] Herodian, l. viii. [c. 5, *fin.*] p. 279 Hist. August. p. 146. [Capitol, Maxi-

The sight of their heads, borne on the point of spears, convinced the citizens of Aquileia that the siege was at an end; the gates of the city were thrown open, a liberal market was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin, and the whole army joined in solemn protestations of fidelity to the senate and the people of Rome, and to their lawful emperors Maximus and Balbinus. Such was the deserved fate of a brutal savage, destitute, as he has generally been represented, of every sentiment that distinguishes a civilised, or even a human being. The body was suited to the soul. The stature of Maximin exceeded the measure of eight feet, and circumstances almost incredible are related of his matchless strength and appetite.[37] Had he lived in a less enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have described him as one of those monstrous giants whose supernatural power was constantly exerted for the destruction of mankind. His portrait.

It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is said to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal procession; his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambassadors of almost all the cities of Italy, saluted with the splendid offerings of gratitude and superstition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the senate and people, who persuaded themselves that a golden age would succeed to an age of iron.[38] The conduct of the two emperors corresponded with these expectations. They administered justice in person; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppressive taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and succession were repealed, or at least moderated. Discipline was revived, and with the advice of the senate many wise laws were enacted by their Imperial ministers, who endeavoured to restore a civil constitution on the ruins of military tyranny. "What reward may we expect for delivering Rome from "a monster?" was the question asked by Maximus in a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus answered it without hesitation, Joy of the Roman world.

min, c. 23.] The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. ix. 1); we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek version of Pæanius.

[37] Eight Roman feet and one third, which are equal to above eight English feet, as the two measures are to each other in the proportion of 967 to 1000. See Graves's discourse on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about seven gallons) of wine, and eat thirty or forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded waggon, break a horse's leg with his fist, crumble stones in his hand, and tear up small trees by the roots. See his Life in the Augustan History.

[38] See the congratulatory letter of Claudius Julianus the consul, to the two emperors, in the Augustan History [p. 172, Capitol. Max. et Balb. c. 17].

"The love of the senate, of the people, and of all mankind." "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "Alas! I dread the hatred "of the soldiers and the fatal effects of their resentment."[39] His apprehensions were but too well justified by the event.

Sedition at Rome.

Whilst Maximus was preparing to defend Italy against the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in scenes of blood and intestine discord. Distrust and jealousy reigned in the senate; and even in the temples where they assembled every senator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midst of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curiosity or a sinister motive, audaciously thrust themselves into the house, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a consular, and Mæcenas a Prætorian senator, viewed with indignation their insolent intrusion: drawing their daggers, they laid the spies, for such they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then, advancing to the door of the senate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to massacre the Prætorians as the secret adherents of the tyrant. Those who escaped the first fury of the tumult took refuge in the camp, which they defended with superior advantage against the reiterated attacks of the people, assisted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property of opulent nobles. The civil war lasted many days, with infinite loss and confusion on both sides. When the pipes were broken that supplied the camp with water the Prætorians were reduced to intolerable distress; but in their turn they made desperate sallies into the city, set fire to a great number of houses, and filled the streets with the blood of the inhabitants. The emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to reconcile the factions at Rome. But their animosity, though smothered for a while, burnt with redoubled violence. The soldiers, detesting the senate and the people, despised the weakness of a prince who wanted either the spirit or the power to command the obedience of his subjects.[40]

Discontent of the Prætorian guards.

After the tyrant's death his formidable army had acknowledged, from necessity rather than from choice, the authority of Maximus, who transported himself without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As soon as he had received their oath of fidelity he addressed them in terms full of mildness and moderation; lamented, rather than arraigned, the wild disorders of the times, and assured the soldiers, that of all their past conduct the senate would remember only their generous desertion of the tyrant and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his

[39] Hist. August. p. 171. [Capitol. ib. c. 15.]
[40] Herodian, l. vii. [c. 12] p. 258.

exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a solemn sacrifice of expiation, and then dismissed the legions to their several provinces, impressed, as he hoped, with a lively sense of gratitude and obedience.[41] But nothing could reconcile the haughty spirit of the Prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome; but, amidst the general acclamations, the sullen dejected countenance of the guards sufficiently declared that they considered themselves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, those who had served under Maximin, and those who had remained at Rome, insensibly communicated to each other their complaints and apprehensions. The emperors chosen by the army had perished with ignominy; those elected by the senate were seated on the throne.[42] The long discord between the civil and military powers was decided by a war in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The soldiers must now learn a new doctrine of submission to the senate; and whatever clemency was affected by that politic assembly, they dreaded a slow revenge, coloured by the name of discipline, and justified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was still in their own hands; and if they had courage to despise the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was easy to convince the world that those who were masters of the arms were masters of the authority of the state.

Massacre of Maximus and Balbinus.

When the senate elected two princes it is probable that, besides the declared reason of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the secret desire of weakening by division the despotism of the supreme magistrate. Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and to themselves. The jealousy of power was soon exasperated by the difference of character. Maximus despised Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn disdained by his colleague as an obscure soldier. Their silent discord was understood rather than seen;[43] but the mutual consciousness prevented them from uniting in any vigorous measures of defence against their common enemies of the Prætorian camp. The whole city was employed in the Capitoline games, and the emperors were left almost alone in the palace. On a sudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of desperate assassins. Ignorant of each other's situation or designs,

[41] Herodian, l. viii. [c. 7.]

[42] The observation had been made imprudently enough in the acclamations of the senate, and with regard to the soldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton insult. Hist. August. p. 170. [Capitol. Max. et Balb. c. 12, 13.]

[43] Discordiæ tacitæ, et quæ intelligerentur potius quam viderentur. Hist. August. p. 170. [Capitol. ib. c. 14.] This well-chosen expression is probably stolen from some better writer.

for they already occupied very distant apartments, afraid to give or to receive assistance, they wasted the important moments in idle debates and fruitless recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain strife. They seized on these emperors of the senate, for such they called them with malicious contempt, stripped them of their garments, and dragged them in insolent triumph through the streets of Rome, with the design of inflicting a slow and cruel death on these unfortunate princes. The fear of a rescue from the faithful Germans of the Imperial guards shortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thousand wounds, were left exposed to the insults or to the pity of the populace.[44]

A.D. 238, July 15. June 15.]

The third Gordian remains sole emperor.

In the space of a few months six princes had been cut off by the sword. Gordian, who had already received the title of Cæsar, was the only person that occurred to the soldiers as proper to fill the vacant throne.[45] They carried him to the camp and unanimously saluted him Augustus and Emperor. His name was dear to the senate and people; his tender age promised a long impunity of military licence; and the submission of Rome and the provinces to the choice of the Prætorian guards saved the republic, at the expense indeed of its freedom and dignity, from the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of the capital.[46]

Innocence and virtues of Gordian.

As the third Gordian was only nineteen years of age at the time of his death, the history of his life, were it known to us with greater accuracy than it really is, would contain little more than the account of his education and the conduct of the ministers who by turns abused or guided the simplicity of his unexperienced youth. Immediately after his accession he fell into the hands of his mother's eunuchs, that pernicious vermin of the East, who, since the days of Elagabalus, had infested the Roman palace. By the artful conspiracy of these wretches an impenetrable veil was drawn between an innocent prince and his oppressed subjects, the virtuous disposition of Gordian was deceived, and the honours of the empire sold without

[44] Herodian, l. viii. [c. 8] p. 287, 288.

[45] Quia non alius erat in præsenti, is the expression of the Augustan History. [Capitol. Max. et Balb. c. 14.]

[46] Quintus Curtius (l. x. c. 9) pays an elegant compliment to the emperor of the day, for having, by his happy accession, extinguished so many firebrands, sheathed so many swords, and put an end to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with attention every word of the passage, I am of opinion that it suits better with the elevation of Gordian than with any other period of the Roman history. In that case it may serve to decide the age of Quintus Curtius. Those who place him under the first Cæsars argue from the purity of his style, but are embarrassed by the silence of Quintilian in his accurate list of Roman historians.[a]

[a] Most modern critics place Q. Curtius in the time of Vespasian; but Niebuhr supposes that Curtius and Petronius were contemporaries of Septimius Severus. See Niebuhr, Kleine Schriften, vol. i. p. 305, *seq.*; Buttmann, Ueber das Leben des Geschichtschreibers Q. Curtius, Berlin, 1820.—S.

his knowledge, though in a very public manner, to the most worthless of mankind. We are ignorant by what fortunate accident the emperor escaped from this ignominious slavery, and devolved his confidence on a minister whose wise counsels had no object except the glory of his sovereign and the happiness of the people. It should seem that love and learning introduced Misitheus[7] to the favour of Gordian. The young prince married the daughter of his master of rhetoric, and promoted his father-in-law to the first offices of the empire. Two admirable letters that passed between them are still extant. The minister, with the conscious dignity of virtue, congratulates Gordian that he is delivered from the tyranny of the eunuchs,[8] and still more that he is sensible of his deliverance. The emperor acknowledges, with an amiable confusion, the errors of his past conduct; and laments, with singular propriety, the misfortune of a monarch from whom a venal tribe of courtiers perpetually labour to conceal the truth.[9]

A.D. 240. Administration of Misitheus.

The life of Misitheus had been spent in the profession of letters, not of arms; yet such was the versatile genius of that great man, that, when he was appointed Prætorian præfect, he discharged the military duties of his place with vigour and ability. The Persians had invaded Mesopotamia, and threatened Antioch. By the persuasion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the last time recorded in history, the temple of Janus, and marched in person into the East. On his approach with a great army, the Persians withdrew their garrisons from the cities which they had already taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Gordian enjoyed the pleasure of announcing to the senate the first success of his arms, which he ascribed with becoming modesty and gratitude to the wisdom of his father and præfect. During the whole expedition, Misitheus watched over the

The Persian War, A.D. 242.

[7] Hist. August. p. 101. [Capitol. Gordian. Tert. c. 24, 25.] From some hints in the two letters, I should expect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace without some degree of gentle violence, and that the young Gordian rather approved of, than consented to, their disgrace.

[8] Duxit uxorem filiam Misithei, quem causâ eloquentiæ dignum parentelâ suâ putavit; et præfectum statim fecit; post quod, non puerile jam et contemptibile videbatur imperium. [Capitol. Gordian. Tert. c. 23.]

[9] This name, which is found in Capitolinus, has been justly suspected by modern scholars, to whom it has seemed very improbable that such an appellation as *Misitheus* should have been borne by an individual of eminence. The inscription in which this name is found (Grater, p. 439, 4) is probably a forgery. Zosimus (i. 17) calls the father-in-law of Gordian Timesicles, and in an inscription (Sponius, Miscell. p. 148) the name of Temesitheus occurs; but it is uncertain whether this refers to the same person. There can be no doubt, however, that Timesicles or Temesitheus is more correct than Misitheus. Of the former two Temesitheus, or rather Timesitheus, which is found both in Herodotus and Xenophon; and, under its Doric form Timasitheus, in Livy and Valerius Maximus, seems to be the most probable. See Eckhel, vol. vii. p. 319.—S.

safety and discipline of the army; whilst he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by establishing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, straw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier.[49] But the prosperity of Gordian expired with Misitheus, who died of a flux, not without very strong suspicions of poison. Philip, his successor in the præfecture, was an Arab by birth, and consequently, in the earlier part of his life, a robber by profession. His rise from so obscure a station to the first dignities of the empire seems to prove that he was a bold and able leader. But his boldness prompted him to aspire to the throne, and his abilities were employed to supplant, not to serve, his indulgent master. The minds of the soldiers were irritated by an artificial scarcity, created by his contrivance in the camp; and the distress of the army was attributed to the youth and incapacity of the prince. It is not in our power to trace the successive steps of the secret conspiracy and open sedition which were at length fatal to Gordian. A sepulchral monument was erected to his memory on the spot[50] where he was killed, near the conflux of the Euphrates with the little river Aboras.[51] The fortunate Philip, raised to the empire by the votes of the soldiers, found a ready obedience from the senate and the provinces.[52]

A.D. 243. Arts of Philip.

Murder of Gordian, A.D. 244, March.

We cannot forbear transcribing the ingenious, though somewhat fanciful description, which a celebrated writer of our own times has traced of the military government of the Roman empire. "What in that age was called the Roman empire was only "an irregular republic, not unlike the aristocracy[53] of Algiers,[54] "where the militia, possessed of the sovereignty, creates and deposes

Form of a military republic.

[49] Hist. August. p. 162. [Capitol. Gordian. Tert. c. 27.] Aurelius Victor [de Cæsar. c. 27]. Porphyrius in Vit. Plotin. ap. Fabricium, Biblioth. Græc. l. iv. c. 36. The philosopher Plotinus accompanied the army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India.

[50] About twenty miles from the little town of Circesium, on the frontier of the two empires.*

[51] The inscription (which contained a very singular pun) was erased by the order of Licinius, who claimed some degree of relationship to Philip (Hist. August. p. 165. [Capitol. Gordian. Tert. c. 34]); but the *tumulus* or mound of earth which formed the sepulchre still subsisted in the time of Julian. See Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 5.

[52] Aurelius Victor. Eutrop. ix. 2. Orosius, vii. 20. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 5. Zosimus, I. i. [c. 19, p. 22] p. 19. Philip, who was a native of Bostra, was about forty years of age.

[53] Can the epithet of *Aristocracy* be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government fluctuates between the extremes of absolute monarchy and wild democracy.

[54] The military republic of the Mamalukes in Egypt would have afforded M. de Montesquieu (see Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 16) a juster and more noble parallel.

* On the position of Circesium, see c. xiii. editor's note on note 77.—S.

"a magistrate, who is styled a Dey. Perhaps, indeed, it may be "laid down as a general rule, that a military government is, in some "respects, more republican than monarchical. Nor can it be said "that the soldiers only partook of the government by their dis-"obedience and rebellions. The speeches made to them by the "emperors, were they not at length of the same nature as those "formerly pronounced to the people by the consuls and the tribunes? "And although the armies had no regular place or forms of assembly; "though their debates were short, their action sudden, and their "resolves seldom the result of cool reflection, did they not dispose, "with absolute sway, of the public fortune? What was the emperor, "except the minister of a violent government, elected for the private "benefit of the soldiers?

"When the army had elected Philip, who was Prætorian præfect "to the third Gordian, the latter demanded that he might remain "sole emperor; he was unable to obtain it. He requested that the "power might be equally divided between them; the army would not "listen to his speech. He consented to be degraded to the rank of "Cæsar; the favour was refused him. He desired, at least, he might "be appointed Prætorian præfect; his prayer was rejected. Finally, "he pleaded for his life. The army, in these several judgments, "exercised the supreme magistracy." According to the historian, whose doubtful narrative the president De Montesquieu has adopted, Philip, who, during the whole transaction, had preserved a sullen silence, was inclined to spare the innocent life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his innocence might excite a dangerous compassion in the Roman world, he commanded, without regard to his suppliant cries, that he should be seized, stripped, and led away to instant death. After a moment's pause the inhuman sentence was executed.[55]

Reign of Philip.

On his return from the East to Rome, Philip, desirous of obliterating the memory of his crimes, and of captivating the affections of the people, solemnised the secular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their institution or revival by Augustus,[56] they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian,

[55] The Augustan History (p. 163, 164 [Capitol. Gordian. Tert. c. 30]) cannot, in this instance, be reconciled with itself or with probability. How could Philip condemn his predecessor, and yet consecrate his memory? How could he order his public execution, and yet, in his letters to the senate, exculpate himself from the guilt of his death? Philip, though an ambitious usurper, was by no means a mad tyrant. Some chronological difficulties have likewise been discovered, by the nice eyes of Tillemont and Muratori, in this supposed association of Philip to the empire.

[56] The account of the last supposed celebration, though in an enlightened period of history, was so very doubtful and obscure, that the alternative seems not doubtful. When the popish jubilees, the copy of the secular games, were invented by Boniface VIII., the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient institution. See M. le Chais, Lettres sur les Jubilès.

and by Severus, and were now renewed the fifth time, on the accomplishment of the full period of a thousand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumstance of the secular games was skilfully adapted to inspire the superstitious mind with deep and solemn reverence. The long interval between them [57] exceeded the term of human life; and as none of the spectators had already seen them, none could flatter themselves with the expectation of beholding them a second time. The mystic sacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tiber; and the Campus Martius resounded with music and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Slaves and strangers were excluded from any participation in these national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-seven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, and whose parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the present, and for the hope of the rising generation; requesting, in religious hymns, that, according to the faith of their ancient oracles, they would still maintain the virtue, the felicity, and the empire of the Roman people.[58] The magnificence of Philip's shows and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude. The devout were employed in the rites of superstition, whilst the reflecting few revolved in their anxious minds the past history and the future fate of the empire.

Secular games, A.D. 248, April 21.

Since Romulus, with a small band of shepherds and outlaws, fortified himself on the hills near the Tiber, ten centuries had already elapsed.[59] During the four first ages, the Romans, in the laborious school of poverty, had acquired the virtues of war and government: by the vigorous exertion of those virtues, and by the assistance of fortune, they had obtained, in the course of the three succeeding centuries, an absolute empire over many countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The last three hundred years had been consumed in apparent prosperity and internal decline. The nation of soldiers, magistrates, and legislators, who composed the thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was dissolved into the common mass of mankind, and confounded with the millions of servile provincials, who had received the name, without adopting the spirit, of Romans. A mercenary army, levied among the subjects and barbarians of the

Decline of the Roman empire.

[57] Either of a hundred or a hundred and ten years. Varro and Livy adopted the former opinion, but the infallible authority of the Sibyl consecrated the latter (Censorinus de Die Natal. c. 17). The emperors Claudius and Philip, however, did not treat the oracle with implicit respect.

[58] The idea of the secular games is best understood from the poem of Horace and the description of Zosimus, l. ii. [c. 5, *seq.*]

[59] The received calculation of Varro assigns to the foundation of Rome an æra that corresponds with the 754th year before Christ. But so little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on in the more early ages, that Sir Isaac Newton has brought the same event as low as the year 627. [Compare Niebuhr, vol. i. p. 271.—M.]

frontier, was the only order of men who preserved and abused their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and invested with despotic power over the conquests and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire still extended from the Western Ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiscerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no less powerful than Hadrian or Augustus had formerly been. The form was still the same, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of oppression. The discipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakness, of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which had always consisted in arms rather than in fortifications, was insensibly undermined; and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians, who soon discovered the decline of the Roman empire.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE STATE OF PERSIA AFTER THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY BY ARTAXERXES.

The barbarians of the East and of the North.

WHENEVER Tacitus indulges himself in those beautiful episodes in which he relates some domestic transaction of the Germans or of the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform scene of vice and misery. From the reign of Augustus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her bosom—the tyrants, and the soldiers; and her prosperity had a very distant and feeble interest in the revolutions that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But when the military order had levelled in wild anarchy the power of the prince, the laws of the senate, and even the discipline of the camp, the barbarians of the North and of the East, who had long hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long vicissitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders established themselves in the provinces of the Roman empire. To obtain a clearer knowledge of these great events we shall endeavour to form a previous idea of the character, forces, and designs of those nations who avenged the cause of Hannibal and Mithridates.

Revolutions of Asia.

In the more early ages of the world, whilst the forest that covered Europe afforded a retreat to a few wandering savages, the inhabitants of Asia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extensive empires, the seat of the arts, of luxury, and of despotism. The Assyrians reigned over the East[1] till the sceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropped from the hands of their enervated successors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, and were themselves swallowed up in the monarchy of the Persians, whose arms could not be confined within the narrow limits

[1] An ancient chronologist quoted by Velleius Paterculus (l. i. c. 6) observes that the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Asia one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the accession of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of these great events happened 289 years before Christ, the former may be placed 2184 years before the same æra. The Astronomical Observations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.

of Asia. Followed, as it is said, by two millions of *men*, Xerxes, the descendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thousand *soldiers*, under the command of Alexander, the son of Philip, who was intrusted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were sufficient to subdue Persia. The princes of the house of Seleucus usurped and lost the Macedonian command over the East. About the same time that by an ignominious treaty they resigned to the Romans the country on this side Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obscure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Asia. The formidable power of the Parthians, which spread from India to the frontiers of Syria, was in its turn subverted by Ardshir or Artaxerxes, the founder of a new dynasty, which, under the name of Sassanides, governed Persia till the invasion of the Arabs. This great revolution, whose fatal influence was soon experienced by the Romans, happened in the fourth year of Alexander Severus, two hundred and twenty-six years after the Christian æra.[2]

The Persian monarchy restored by Artaxerxes.

Artaxerxes had served with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the last king of the Parthians, and it appears that he was driven into exile and rebellion by royal ingratitude, the customary reward for superior merit. His birth was obscure, and the obscurity equally gave room to the aspersions of his enemies, and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the scandal of the former, Artaxerxes sprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common soldier.[3] The latter represent him as descended from a branch of the ancient kings of Persia, though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his ancestors to the humble station of private citizens.[4] As the lineal heir of the monarchy, he asserted his right to the throne, and challenged the noble task of delivering the Persians from the oppression under which they groaned above five centuries since the death of Darius. The Parthians were defeated in three great battles.[a] In the last of these their king Artaban was slain, and the spirit of the nation was for

[2] In the five hundred and thirty-eighth year of the æra of Seleucus. See Agathias, l. ii. [c. 27] p. 65 [ed. Paris; p. 123, ed. Bonn.] This great event (such is the carelessness of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius as high as the tenth year of Commodus; and by Moses of Chorene as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has so servilely copied (xxiii. 6) his ancient materials, which are indeed very good, that he describes the family of the Arsacides as still seated on the Persian throne in the middle of the fourth century.

[3] The tanner's name was Babec; the soldier's, Sassan: from the former Artaxerxes obtained the surname of Babegan, from the latter all his descendants have been styled *Sassanides*.

[4] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, *Ardshir*.

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[a] In the plain of Hoormuz the son of Babek was hailed in the field with the proud title of Shahan Shah, king of kings, a name ever since assumed by the sovereigns of Persia. Malcolm, Hist. of Persia, i. 71.—M.

ever broken.[5] The authority of Artaxerxes was solemnly acknowledged in a great assembly held at Balch in Khorasan.[a] Two younger branches of the royal house of Arsaces were confounded among the prostrate satraps. A third, more mindful of ancient grandeur than of present necessity, attempted to retire, with a numerous train of vassals, towards their kinsman, the king of Armenia: but this little army of deserters was intercepted and cut off by the vigilance of the conqueror,[6] who boldly assumed the double diadem and the title of King of Kings which had been enjoyed by his predecessor. But these pompous titles, instead of gratifying the vanity of the Persian, served only to admonish him of his duty, and to inflame in his soul the ambition of restoring, in their full splendour, the religion and empire of Cyrus.

Reformation of the Magian religion.

I. During the long servitude of Persia under the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the nations of Europe and Asia had mutually adopted and corrupted each other's superstitions. The Arsacides, indeed, practised the worship of the Magi; but they disgraced and polluted it with a various mixture of foreign idolatry. The memory of Zoroaster, the ancient prophet and philosopher of the Persians,[7] was still revered in the East; but the obsolete and mysterious language in which the Zendavesta was composed[8] opened a field of dispute to seventy sects, who variously

[5] Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. [c. 3.] Herodian, l. vi. [c. 2] p. 207. Abulpharagius Dynast. p. 80.

[6] See Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 65–71.

[7] Hyde and Prideaux, working up the Persian legends and their own conjectures into a very agreeable story, represent Zoroaster as a contemporary of Darius Hystaspis. But it is sufficient to observe, that the Greek writers who lived almost in the age of Darius agree in placing the æra of Zoroaster many hundred, or even thousand, years before their own time. The judicious criticism of Mr. Moyle perceived, and maintained against his uncle Dr. Prideaux, the antiquity of the Persian prophet. See his work, vol. ii.[b]

[8] That ancient idiom was called the *Zend*. The language of the commentary, the Pehlvi, though much more modern, has ceased many ages ago to be a living tongue. This fact alone (if it is allowed as authentic) sufficiently warrants the antiquity of

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[a] See the Persian account of the rise of Ardeschir Babegan in Malcolm, i. 69. —M.

[b] Zoroaster, called Zarathustra in the Zendavesta, and Zerdusht by the Persians, is universally represented as the founder of the Magian religion; but the most opposite opinions have been held both by ancient and modern writers respecting the time in which he lived. In the Zendavesta, Zarathustra is said to have lived in the reign of Vitaçpa, called Gushtasp by the Persians, who belonged to the dynasty of the Kâvja, or, as they are called in modern Persian, the Kayanians. This Gushtasp has been frequently identified with Darius Hystaspis; but a more critical examination of the Zendavesta has proved, almost beyond question, that the religion of Zarathustra arose in the eastern parts of Iran, in the countries of Margiana, Bactria, and Sogdiana, from whence it spread to the western districts of Iran. The date of the prophet cannot be assigned with certainty; but he must have lived before the Persian dynasty, perhaps about B.C. 800. See Lassen, Indische Alterthumskunde, vol i. p. 752, *seq.*; Duncker, Geschichte des Alterthums, vol. ii. p. 307, *seq.*—S.

the fundamental doctrines of their religion, and were all ntly derided by a crowd of infidels, who rejected the divine on and miracles of the prophet. To suppress the idolaters, unite the schismatics, and confute the unbelievers by the infallible decision of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes summoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions. These priests, who had so long sighed in contempt and obscurity, obeyed the welcome summons: and on the appointed day appeared to the number of about eighty thousand. But as the debates of so tumultuous an assembly could not have been directed by the authority of reason, or influenced by the art of policy, the Persian synod was reduced, by successive operations, to forty thousand, to four thousand, to four hundred, to forty, and at last to seven Magi, the most respected for their learning and piety. One of these, Erdaviraph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren three cups of soporiferous wine. He drank them off, and instantly fell into a long and profound sleep. As soon as he waked he related to the king, and to the believing multitude his journey to Heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was silenced by this supernatural evidence; and the articles of the faith of Zoroaster were fixed with equal authority and precision.[9] A short delineation of that celebrated system will be found useful, not only to display the character of the Persian nation, but to illustrate many of their most important transactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire.[10]

those writings which M. d'Anquetil has brought into Europe, and translated into French."

[9] Hyde de Religione veterum Pers. c. 21.

[10] I have principally drawn this account from the Zendavesta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sadder, subjoined to Dr. Hyde's treatise. It must, however, be confessed, that

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[*] Both the Zend and the Pehlvi belong to the Indo-European family of languages. The Zend was spoken in the eastern part of Iran, and bears a close resemblance to the Sanscrit. The Pehlvi, which was the more modern form of the ancient Persian language, was spoken in the western parts of Iran in the times of the Arsacidæ and the Sassanidæ, and had received many Semitic forms from its proximity to the Semitic languages. The sacred books, which contained the religious system of Zoroaster, were written in Zend, and were called the Zendavesta. According to the tradition of the Parsees, they consisted originally of 21 books, but of these only the 20th is now extant, called the Vendidad. Upon the restoration of the Persian religion by the Sassanidæ, the books of the Zendavesta were collected, and were then translated into Pehlvi, the vernacular language of western Iran, since the Zend was then unintelligible to the people, and probably even to the priests. Anquetil du Perron, who first brought the Zendavesta to Europe, made his translation from the Pehlvi; but portions of the Zendavesta have been published in the original by Burnouf at Paris, and Olshausen at Hamburg. It was long maintained, even by Oriental scholars, that the Zend was an invention of the Parsee priests; but the genuineness of the language, and its close connexion with the Sanscrit, have been proved by Rask, Bohlen, Burnouf, and Bopp, and are now admitted by all Oriental scholars. —See Rask, Ueber das Alter und die Echtheit der Zendsprache; Bohlen, de Origine Linguæ Zendicæ; Burnouf, Commentaire sur le Yaçna (a portion of the Vendidad); Bopp, Vergleichende Grammatik; see also Kleuker, Anhang zum Zendavesta.—S.

Persian theology; two principles.

The great and fundamental article of the system was [illegible] brated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and in[illegible] attempt of Eastern philosophy to reconcile the existenc[illegible] moral and physical evil with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The first and original Being, in whom, or by whom, the universe exists, is denominated, in the writings of Zoroaster, *Time without bounds*,[b] but it must be confessed that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, or possessed of moral perfections. From either the blind or the intelligent operation of this infinite Time, which bears but too near an affinity with the Chaos of the Greeks, the two secondary but active principles of the universe were from all eternity produced, Ormusd and Ahriman, each of them possessed of the powers of creation, but each disposed, by his invariable nature, to exercise them with different designs. The principle of good is eternally absorbed in light: the principle of evil eternally buried in darkness. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced *Ormusd's egg*; or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal irruption the most minute articles of good and evil are intimately intermingled and agitated together; the rankest poisons spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations attest the conflict of Nature; and the little world of man is perpetually shaken by vice and misfortune. Whilst the rest

the studied obscurity of a prophet, the figurative style of the East, and the deceitful medium of a French or Latin version, may have betrayed us into error and heresy in this abridgment of Persian theology.[a]

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[a] It is to be regretted that Gibbon followed the Sadder, which is certainly post-Mahometan. Hyde considered that it was written not more than 200 years before his time.—G. & M.

[b] This is not correct: The doctrine of *Time without bounds* (a translation of *Zervanakarana*), as the first and original principle from which Ormusd and Ahriman were created, is not found in the Zendavesta. It was probably first introduced into the Persian religion through the influence of the Greek philosophy. In the Zendavesta the simple representation is, that all the good spirits are subject to Ahuramasda (Ormusd), and all the evil spirits to Angramainjus (Ahriman), and there is no notice whatsoever of those questions respecting the origin of evil which were so zealously discussed in the times of the Sassanidæ. The doctrine of *Time without bounds* is first mentioned by Theodorus, bishop of Mopsuestia, who died A.D. 429, in a work on the Magian religion, in which he speaks of the "Zarouane" as the first principle among the Persians. (Phot. Cod. 81, p. 63, ed. Bekker.) From Oriental authorities we know that in the times of the Sassanidæ, and subsequently under the Arabs, there was a sect of the Magi which regarded the Zarvana as the original principle. See Duncker, Geschichte des Alterthums, vol. ii. p. 388.—S.

of human kind are led away captives in the chains of their infernal enemy, the faithful Persian alone reserves his religious adoration for his friend and protector Ormusd, and fights under his banner of light, in the full confidence that he shall, in the last day, share the glory of his triumph. At that decisive period the enlightened wisdom of goodness will render the power of Ormusd superior to the furious malice of his rival. Ahriman and his followers, disarmed and subdued, will sink into their native darkness; and virtue will maintain the eternal peace and harmony of the universe.[11] [a]

Religious worship.

The theology of Zoroaster was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his disciples; but the most careless observers were struck with the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship. "That people," says Herodotus,[12] "rejects the use of temples, of altars, and of statues, and smiles at "the folly of those nations who imagine that the gods are sprung "from, or bear any affinity with, the human nature. The tops of "the highest mountains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns "and prayers are the principal worship; the Supreme God, who fills "the wide circle of heaven, is the object to whom they are addressed." Yet, at the same time, in the true spirit of a polytheist, he accuses them of adoring Earth, Water, Fire, the Winds, and the Sun and Moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly Fire, Light, and the Sun, whom they called Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the noblest pro-

[11] The modern Parsees (and in some degree the Sadder) exalt Ormusd into the first and omnipotent cause, whilst they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious spirit. Their desire of pleasing the Mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological system.

[12] Herodotus, l. i. c. 131. But Dr. Prideaux thinks, with reason, that the use of temples was afterwards permitted in the Magian religion.[b]

[a] The fragments of the Zendavesta contain nothing respecting the final defeat of Ahriman and the future happiness of the world. But it is evident from the Greek writers that this doctrine formed part of the Persian system of religion even at an early period (Plutarch, de Iside, c. 47); and hence we may conclude either that it was contained in the lost books of Zoroaster, or that it belonged rather to the Medo-Persian than to the Bactrian system of religion.—S.

[b] The fire temples, such as are now in use among the Parsees, are first mentioned by Strabo (xv. p. 732), and Pausanias (v. 27, §§ 5, 6). At a later period, according to Berosus (Fragm. 16, ed. Müller), the Persians began to worship statues of the gods in human form. The same writer relates that this custom was first introduced by Artaxerxes, the son of Ochus, who set up statues of Aphrodite Anaïtis in the chief cities of his dominions. Even in the existing monuments of Darius we find symbolical representations of the deity like the Assyrian. It is, however, certain that the worship of images was originally foreign to the Persian religion; but, surrounded as the western Iranians were by idolatrous nations, it is not impossible that they may to some extent have adopted this practice from their neighbours.—S.

ductions, and the most powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature.[13]

Ceremonies and moral precepts.

Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience by enjoining practices of devotion for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our esteem by inculcating moral duties analogous to the dictates of our own hearts. The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment all the actions of his life, even the most indifferent or the most necessary, were sanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omission of which, under any circumstances, was a grievous sin, not inferior in guilt to the violation of the moral duties. The moral duties, however, of justice, mercy, liberality, &c., were, in their turn, required of the disciple of Zoroaster who wished to escape the persecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormusd in a blissful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety.[14]

Encouragement of agriculture.

But there are some remarkable instances in which Zoroaster lays aside the prophet, assumes the legislator, and discovers a liberal concern for private and public happiness, seldom to be found among the grovelling or visionary schemes of superstition. Fasting and celibacy, the common means of purchasing the divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal rejection of the best gifts of Providence. The saint, in the Magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Persia, and to work out his salvation by pursuing all the labours of agriculture.[a] We may quote from the Zendavesta a wise and benevolent maxim, which compensates for many an absurdity. "He who sows the ground "with care and diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit "than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers."[15] In the spring of every year a festival was celebrated, destined to represent the primitive equality, and the present connexion, of man

[13] Hyde de Relig. Pers. c. 8. Notwithstanding all their distinctions and protestations, which seem sincere enough, their tyrants, the Mahometans, have constantly stigmatised them as idolatrous worshippers of the fire.

[14] See the Sadder, the smallest part of which consists of moral precepts. The ceremonies enjoined are infinite and trifling. Fifteen genuflexions, prayers, &c., were required whenever the devout Persian cut his nails or made water; or as often as he put on the sacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14, 50, 60.

[15] Zendavesta, tom. i. p. 224, and Précis du Système de Zoroastre, tom. iii.

[a] See, on Zoroaster's encouragement of agriculture, Heeren, Ideen, vol. i. p. 449, &c., and the ingenious remarks of Rhode, Heilige Sage, p. 517.—M.

kind. The stately kings of Persia, exchanging their vain pomp for more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the humblest but most useful of their subjects. On that day the husbandmen were admitted, without distinction, to the table of the king and his satraps. The monarch accepted their petitions, inquired into their grievances, and conversed with them on the most equal terms. "From your labours," was he accustomed to say (and to say with truth, if not with sincerity), "from your labours we receive our subsistence; you derive your "tranquillity from our vigilance: since, therefore, we are mutually "necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers in concord "and love."[16] Such a festival must indeed have degenerated, in a wealthy and despotic empire, into a theatrical representation; but it was at least a comedy well worthy of a royal audience, and which might sometimes imprint a salutary lesson on the mind of a young prince.

Had Zoroaster, in all his institutions, invariably supported this exalted character, his name would deserve a place with those of Numa and Confucius, and his system would be justly entitled to all the applause which it has pleased some of our divines, and even some of our philosophers, to bestow on it. But in that motley composition, dictated by reason and passion, by enthusiasm and by selfish motives, some useful and sublime truths were disgraced by a mixture of the most abject and dangerous superstition. The Magi, or sacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, since, as we have already seen, fourscore thousand of them were convened in a general council. Their forces were multiplied by discipline. A regular hierarchy was diffused through all the provinces of Persia; and the Archimagus, who resided at Balch, was respected as the visible head of the church, and the lawful successor of Zoroaster.[17] The property of the Magi was very considerable. Besides the less invidious possession of a large tract of the most fertile lands of Media,[18] they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the industry of the Persians.[19] "Though your good works," says the interested

Power of the Magi.

[16] Hyde de Religione Persarum, c. 19.

[17] Hyde de Religione Persarum, c. 28. Both Hyde and Prideaux affect to apply to the Magian the terms consecrated to the Christian hierarchy.

[18] Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two curious particulars; 1, that the Magi derived some of their most secret doctrines from the Indian Brachmans; and, 2, that they were a tribe, or family, as well as order.[a]

[19] The divine institution of tithes exhibits a singular instance of conformity between the law of Zoroaster and that of Moses. Those who cannot otherwise account for it may suppose, if they please, that the Magi of the latter times inserted so useful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet.

[a] In the Zendavesta the name of Magi does not occur, but the priests are called Athrava. Magi was the name of the sacerdotal order in western Iran: it exists in the Bisitun inscription of Darius in the form of Maghush.—S.

prophet, "exceed in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of "rain, the stars in the heaven, or the sands on the sea-shore, they "will all be unprofitable to you, unless they are accepted by the "*destour*, or priest. To obtain the acceptation of this guide to salva- "tion, you must faithfully pay him *tithes* of all you possess, of your "goods, of your lands, and of your money. If the destour be satis- "fied, your soul will escape hell tortures; you will secure praise in "this world and happiness in the next. For the destours are the "teachers of religion; they know all things and they deliver all "men."[20]

These convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtless imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth; since the Magi were the masters of education in Persia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intrusted.[21] The Persian priests, who were of a speculative genius, preserved and investigated the secrets of Oriental philosophy; and acquired, either by superior knowledge or superior art, the reputation of being well versed in some occult sciences, which have derived their appellation from the Magi.[22] Those of more active dispositions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is observed that the administration of Artaxerxes was, in a great measure, directed by the counsels of the sacerdotal order, whose dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince restored to its ancient splendour.[23]

Spirit of persecution.

The first counsel of the Magi was agreeable to the unsociable genius of their faith,[24] to the practice of ancient kings,[25] and even to the example of their legislator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war excited by his own intolerant zeal.[26] By an edict of Artaxerxes the exercise of every worship, except that of Zoroaster, was severely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians, and the statues of their deified monarchs, were thrown down with ignominy.[27] The sword of Aristotle (such was the name

[20] Sadder, Art. viii.

[21] Plato in Alcibiad. [p. 122, § 37.]

[22] Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxx. c. 1) observes, that magic held mankind by the triple chain of religion, of physic, and of astronomy.

[23] Agathias, l. iv. [c. 24] p. 134. [ed. Paris; p. 258, ed. Bonn.][a]

[24] Mr. Hume, in the Natural History of Religion, sagaciously remarks that the most refined and philosophic sects are constantly the most intolerant.[b]

[25] Cicero de Legibus, ii. 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the Magi, destroyed the temples of Greece.

[26] Hyde de Relig. Persar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, *Zurdusht*. Life of Zoroaster in tom. ii. of the Zendavesta.

[27] Compare Moses of Chorene, l. ii. c. 74, with Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. Hereafter I shall make use of these passages.

[a] Agathias mentions the reign of Artaxerxes in this place, but says nothing about the Magi: the passage alluded to seems to be l. ii. c. 26, p. 122, ed. Bonn.—S.

[b] Hume's comparison is rather between theism and polytheism. In India, in Greece, and in modern Europe, philosophic religion has looked down with contemptuous toleration on the superstitions of the vulgar.—M.

given by the Orientals to the polytheism and philosophy of the Greeks) was easily broken;[28] the flames of persecution soon reached the more stubborn Jews and Christians;[29] nor did they spare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majesty of Ormusd, who was jealous of a rival, was seconded by the despotism of Artaxerxes, who could not suffer a rebel; and the schismatics within his vast empire were soon reduced to the inconsiderable number of eighty thousand.[30a] This spirit of persecution reflects dishonour on the religion of Zoroaster; but, as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it served to strengthen the new monarchy, by uniting all the various inhabitants of Persia in the bands of religious zeal.[b]

Establishment of the royal authority in the provinces.

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wrested the sceptre of the East from the ancient royal family of Parthia. There still remained the more difficult task of establishing, throughout the vast extent of Persia, a uniform and vigorous administration. The weak indulgence of the Arsacides had resigned to their sons and brothers the principal provinces and the greatest offices of the kingdom in the nature of hereditary possessions. The *vitaxæ*, or eighteen most powerful satraps, were permitted to assume the regal title, and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over so many vassal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Asia,[31] within their walls, scarcely acknowledged or seldom obeyed any superior; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system[32] which has since prevailed in Europe. But the active victor, at the head of a numerous and dis-

[28] Rabbi Abraham, in the Tarikh Schickard, p. 108, 109.

[29] Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, l. viii. c. 3. Sozomen, l. ii. c. 1. Manes, who suffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a Magian as well as a Christian heretic.

[30] Hyde de Religione Persar. c. 21.

[31] These colonies were extremely numerous. Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-nine cities, all named from himself or some of his relations (see Appian in Syriac. [c. 57], p. 124). The æra of Seleucus (still in use among the eastern Christians) appears as late as the year 508, of Christ 196, on the medals of the Greek cities within the Parthian empire. See Moyle's works, vol. i. p. 273, &c., and M. Freret, Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xix.

[32] The modern Persians distinguish that period as the dynasty of the kings of the nations. See Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 25.

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[a] It is incorrect to attribute these persecutions to Artaxerxes. The Jews were held in honour by him, and their schools flourished during his reign. Compare Jost, Geschichte der Israeliter, b. xv. 5, with Basnage. Sapor was forced by the people to temporary severities; but their real persecution did not begin till the reigns of Yazdegerd and Kobad. Hist. of Jews, iii. 236. According to Sozomen (ii. 8), Sapor first persecuted the Christians. Manes was put to death by Varanes the First, A.D. 277. Beausobre, Hist. de Man. i. 209.—M.

[b] In the testament of Ardischer in Ferdusi, the poet assigns these sentiments to the dying king, as he addresses his son: —"Never forget that, as a king, you are at once the protector of religion and of your country. Consider the altar and the throne as inseparable; they must always sustain each other." Malcolm's Persia, i. 74.—M.

cipline army, visited in person every province of Persia. The defeat of the boldest rebels, and the reduction of the strongest fortifications,[33] diffused the terror of his arms and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obstinate resistance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity.[34] A cheerful submission was rewarded with honours and riches: but the prudent Artaxerxes, suffering no person except himself to assume the title of king, abolished every intermediate power between the throne and the people. His kingdom, nearly equal in extent to modern Persia, was on every side bounded by the sea, or by great rivers,—by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus; by the Caspian Sea and the Gulf of Persia.[35] That country was computed to contain, in the last century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, sixty thousand villages, and about forty millions of souls.[36] If we compare the administration of the house of Sassan with that of the house of Sefi, the political influence of the Magian with that of the Mahometan religion, we shall probably infer that the kingdom of Artaxerxes contained at least as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it must likewise be confessed that in every age the want of harbours on the sea-coast, and the scarcity of fresh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Persians, who, in the calculation of their numbers, seem to have indulged one of the meanest, though most common, artifices of national vanity.

Extent and population of Persia.

As soon as the ambitious mind of Artaxerxes had triumphed over the resistance of his vassals, he began to threaten the neighbouring states, who, during the long slumber of his predecessors, had insulted Persia with impunity. He obtained some easy victories over the wild Scythians and the effeminate Indians: but the Romans were an enemy who, by

Recapitulation of the war between the Parthian and Roman empires.

[33] Eutychius (tom. i. p. 367, 371, 375) relates the siege of the island of Meseno in the Tigris, with some circumstances not unlike the story of Nisus and Scylla.

[34] Agathias, ii. [c. 26] p. 64 [ed. Paris; p. 122, ed. Bonn.]. The princes of Segestan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally transport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impossible that the fabulous exploits of Rostan, Prince of Segestan, may have been grafted on the real history.

[35] We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the sea-coast of Gedrosia or Macran, which extends along the Indian Ocean, from Cape Jask (the promontory Capella) to Cape Goadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of Ichthyophagi, or Fishermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world. See Arrian. de Reb. Indicis [c. 26]. In the twelfth century the little town of Taiz (supposed by M. d'Anville to be the Teza of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched by the resort of the Arabian merchants. (See Geographia Nubiensis, p. 58, and d'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. ii. p. 283.) In the last age the whole country was divided between three princes, one Mahometan and two idolaters, who maintained their independence against the successors of Shah Abbas. (Voyages de Tavernier, part i. v. p. 605.)

[36] Chardin, tom. iii. c. 1, 2, 3.

their past injuries and present power, deserved the utmost efforts of his arms. A forty years' tranquillity, the fruit of valour and moderation, had succeeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapsed from the accession of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in wars: and although the whole strength of the Arsacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was most commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious situation and pusillanimous temper, purchased a peace at the expense of near two millions of our money;[37] but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his son, erected many trophies in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have unseasonably interrupted the more important series of domestic revolutions, we shall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia.[38] Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony,—arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of six hundred thousand citizens; the walls were strong, and, as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian: but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony.[39] The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors, and the Imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia.[40] The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city.[41] Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as

[37] Dion, l. lxxviii. [p. 27] p. 1335.

[38] For the precise situation of Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Modain, and Bagdad, cities often confounded with each other, see an excellent Geographical Tract of M. d'Anville, in Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xxx.

[39] Tacit. Annal. vi. 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 26.

[40] This may be inferred from Strabo, l. xvi. p. 743.

[41] The most curious traveller, Bernier, who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Delhi to Cashmir, describes with great accuracy the numerous moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of 35,000 men, that of infantry of 10,000. It was computed that the camp contained 150,000 horses, mules, and elephants; 50,000 camels, 50,000 oxen, and between 300,000 and 400,000 persons. Almost all Delhi followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry.

Ctesiphon and Seleucia. They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings; yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tarnished the glory of the Roman triumph.[42] Seleucia, already exhausted by the neighbourhood of a too powerful rival, sunk under the fatal blow; but Ctesiphon, in about thirty-three years, had sufficiently recovered its strength to maintain an obstinate siege against the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by assault; the king, who defended it in person, escaped with precipitation; an hundred thousand captives and a rich booty rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers.[43] Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Ctesiphon succeeded to Babylon and to Seleucia as one of the great capitals of the East. In summer the monarch of Persia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildness of the climate engaged him to prefer Ctesiphon for his winter residence.

A.D. 165.

A.D. 198.

From these successful inroads the Romans derived no real or lasting benefit; nor did they attempt to preserve such distant conquests, separated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate desert. The reduction of the kingdom of Osrhoene was an acquisition of less splendour indeed, but of a far more solid advantage. That little state occupied the northern and most fertile part of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edessa, its capital, was situated about twenty miles beyond the former of those rivers, and the inhabitants, since the time of Alexander, were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians.[44] The feeble sovereigns of Osrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Parthian cause; but the superior power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is still attested by their medals. After the conclusion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to secure some substantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were constructed in several parts of the country, and a Roman garrison was fixed in the strong town of

Conquest of Osrhoene by the Romans.

[42] Dion, l. lxxi. [c. 2] p. 1178. Hist. August. p. 38. [Capitol. Verus, c. 8.] Eutrop. viii. 5. Euseb. in Chronic. [An. 166.] Quadratus (quoted in the Augustan History) attempted to vindicate the Romans by alleging that the citizens of Seleucia had first violated their faith.

[43] Dion, l. lxxv. [c. 9] p. 1268. Herodian. l. iii. [c. 9] p. 120. Hist. August. p. 70. [Spartian. Severus, c. 16.]

[44] The polished citizens of Antioch called those of Edessa mixed barbarians. It was, however, some praise, that, of the three dialects of the Syriac, the purest and most elegant (the Aramean) was spoken at Edessa. This remark M. Bayer (Hist. Edess. p. 5.) has borrowed from George of Malatia, a Syrian writer.

Nisibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Osrhoene attempted to shake off the yoke; but the stern policy of Severus confirmed their dependence,[45] and the perfidy of Caracalla completed the easy conquest. Abgarus, the last king of Edessa, was sent in chains to Rome, his dominions reduced into a province, and his capital dignified with the rank of colony; and thus the Romans, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy, obtained a firm and permanent establishment beyond the Euphrates.[46] A.D. 216.

Prudence as well as glory might have justified a war on the side of Artaxerxes, had his views been confined to the defence or the acquisition of a useful frontier. But the ambitious Persian openly avowed a far more extensive design of conquest; and he thought himself able to support his lofty pretensions by the arms of reason as well as by those of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had first subdued, and his successors had for a long time possessed, the whole extent of Asia as far as the Propontis and the Ægean Sea: the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Persian satraps; and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their sovereignty.[47] Their rights had been suspended, but not destroyed, by a long usurpation; and as soon as he received the Persian diadem, which birth and successful valour had placed upon his head, the first great duty of his station called upon him to restore the ancient limits and splendour of the monarchy. The Great King, therefore (such was the haughty style of his embassies to the emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans instantly to depart from all the provinces of his ancestors, and, yielding to the Persians the empire of Asia, to content themselves with the undisturbed possession of Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered by four hundred of the tallest and most beautiful of the Persians, who, by their fine horses, splendid arms, and rich apparel, displayed the pride and greatness of their master.[48] Such an embassy was much less an offer of negotiation than a declaration of war. Both Alexander Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military force of the Roman and Persian monarchies, resolved in this important contest to lead their armies in person.

Artaxerxes claims the provinces of Asia, and declares war against the Romans, A.D. 230.

[45] Dion, l. lxxv. [c. 1–3] p. 1256, 1257, 1258. M. Bayer has neglected to use this most important passage.

[46] This kingdom, from Osrhoes, who gave a new name to the country, to the last Abgarus, had lasted 353 years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, Historia Osrhoena et Edessena.

[47] Xenophon, in the preface to the Cyropædia, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. iii. c. 89, &c.) enters into a curious and particular description of the twenty great *Satrapies* into which the Persian empire was divided by Darius Hystaspis.

[48] Herodian, vi. [c. 2 and 4] 209, 212.

Pretended victory of Alexander Severus, A.D. 233.

If we credit what should seem the most authentic of all records, an oration, still extant, and delivered by the emperor himself to the senate, we must allow that the victory of Alexander Severus was not inferior to any of those formerly obtained over the Persians by the son of Philip. The army of the Great King consisted of one hundred and twenty thousand horse, clothed in complete armour of steel; of seven hundred elephants, with towers filled with archers on their backs; and of eighteen hundred chariots armed with scythes. This formidable host, the like of which is not to be found in eastern history, and has scarcely been imagined in eastern romance,[49] was discomfited in a great battle, in which the Roman Alexander approved himself an intrepid soldier and a skilful general. The Great King fled before his valour: an immense booty, and the conquest of Mesopotamia, were the immediate fruits of this signal victory. Such are the circumstances of this ostentatious and improbable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears, by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the unblushing servility of his flatterers, and received without contradiction by a distant and obsequious senate.[50] Far from being inclined to believe that the arms of Alexander obtained any memorable advantage over the Persians, we are induced to suspect that all this blaze of imaginary glory was designed to conceal some real disgrace.

Our suspicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary

[49] There were two hundred scythed chariots at the battle of Arbela in the host of Darius. In the vast army of Tigranes, which was vanquished by Lucullus, seventeen thousand horse only were completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field against the Romans: by his frequent wars and negotiations with the princes of India, he had once collected an hundred and fifty of those great animals; but it may be questioned whether the most powerful monarch of Hindostan ever formed a line of battle of seven hundred elephants. Instead of three or four thousand elephants, which the Great Mogul was supposed to possess, Tavernier (Voyages, part ii. l. i. p. 198) discovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety for the service of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field; but Quintus Curtius (viii. 13), in this instance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, distinguished by their size and strength. In Siam, where these animals are the most numerous and the most esteemed, eighteen elephants are allowed as a sufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a just army is divided. The whole number, of one hundred and sixty-two elephants of war, may sometimes be doubled. Hist. des Voyages, tom. ix. p. 260.[a]

[50] Hist. August. p. 133. [Capitol. Alex. Sever. c. 55, *sq.*][b]

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[a] Compare Gibbon's note 10 to ch. lvii.—M.

[b] According to the Persian authorities, Ardeshir extended his conquests to the Euphrates. Malcolm, i. 71.—M. Eckhel dissents from Gibbon, because the emperor claimed a victory in his oration to the people, received the honour of a triumph, and is represented as conqueror on his medals. See Eckhel, vol. vii. p. 276. Guizot adopts the opinion of Eckhel; but the above-mentioned objections are not sufficient to outweigh the authority of Herodian, whom Niebuhr follows in preference to the other statements. Niebuhr, Lectures on the History of Rome, vol. iii. p. 278.—S.

historian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with respect, and his faults with candour. He describes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war. Three Roman armies were destined to invade Persia at the same time, and by different roads. But the operations of the campaign, though wisely concerted, were not executed either with ability or success. The first of these armies, as soon as it had entered the marshy plains of Babylon, towards the artificial conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris,[51] was encompassed by the superior numbers, and destroyed by the arrows, of the enemy. The alliance of Chosroes, king of Armenia,[52] and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Persian cavalry was of little service, opened a secure entrance into the heart of Media to the second of the Roman armies. These brave troops laid waste the adjacent provinces, and by several successful actions against Artaxerxes gave a faint colour to the emperor's vanity. But the retreat of this victorious army was imprudent, or at least unfortunate. In repassing the mountains great numbers of soldiers perished by the badness of the roads and the severity of the winter season. It had been resolved that, whilst these two great detachments penetrated into the opposite extremes of the Persian dominions, the main body, under the command of Alexander himself, should support their attack by invading the centre of the kingdom. But the unexperienced youth, influenced by his mother's counsels, and perhaps by his own fears, deserted the bravest troops and the fairest prospect of victory; and, after consuming in Mesopotamia an inactive and inglorious summer, he led back to Antioch an army diminished by sickness, and provoked by disappointment. The behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different. Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to the marshes of the Euphrates, he had everywhere opposed the invaders in person; and in either fortune had united with the ablest conduct the most undaunted resolution. But in several obstinate engagements against the veteran legions of Rome the Persian monarch had lost the flower of his troops. Even his victories had weakened his power. The favourable opportunities of the absence of Alexander, and of the confusions that followed that emperor's death, presented themselves in vain to his ambition. Instead of expelling the Romans, as he pretended, from the continent

More probable account of the war.

[51] M. de Tillemont has already observed that Herodian's geography is somewhat confused.

[52] Moses of Chorene (Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 71) illustrates this invasion of Media, by asserting that Chosroes, king of Armenia, defeated Artaxerxes, and pursued him to the confines of India. The exploits of Chosroes have been magnified; and he acted as a dependent ally to the Romans.

of Asia, he found himself unable to wrest from their hands the little province of Mesopotamia.[53]

Character and maxims of Artaxerxes, A.D. 240.

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the last defeat of the Parthians lasted only fourteen years, forms a memorable æra in the history of the East, and even in that of Rome. His character seems to have been marked by those bold and commanding features that generally distinguish the princes who conquer, from those who inherit, an empire. Till the last period of the Persian monarchy his code of laws was respected as the groundwork of their civil and religious policy.[54] Several of his sayings are preserved. One of them in particular discovers a deep insight into the constitution of government. "The authority of the prince," said Artaxerxes, "must be defended by a military force; that force "can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes must at last fall upon "agriculture; and agriculture can never flourish except under the "protection of justice and moderation."[55] Artaxerxes bequeathed his new empire, and his ambitious designs against the Romans, to Sapor, a son not unworthy of his great father; but those designs were too extensive for the power of Persia, and served only to involve both nations in a long series of destructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

Military power of the Persians.

The Persians, long since civilized and corrupted, were very far from possessing the martial independence and the intrepid hardiness, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians masters of the world. The science of war, that constituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any considerable progress in the East. Those disciplined evolutions which harmonise and animate a confused multitude were unknown to the Persians. They were equally unskilled in the arts of constructing, besieging, or defending regular fortifications. They trusted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their discipline. The infantry was a half-armed, spiritless crowd of peasants, levied in haste by the allurements of plunder, and as easily dispersed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles transported into the camp the pride and luxury of the seraglio.

Their infantry contemptible.

[53] For the account of this war, see Herodian, l. vi. [c. 5] p. 209, 212. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Augustan History.

[54] Eutychius, tom. ii. p. 180, vers. Pocock. The great Chosroes Noushirwan sent the code of Artaxerxes to all his satraps, as the invariable rule of their conduct.

[55] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, au mot *Ardshir*. We may observe that, after an ancient period of fables and a long interval of darkness, the modern histories of Persia begin to assume an air of truth with the dynasty of the Sassanides. [Compare Malcolm, i. 79.—M.]

Their military operations were impeded by a useless train of women, eunuchs, horses, and camels; and in the midst of a successful campaign the Persian host was often separated or destroyed by an unexpected famine.[56]

But the nobles of Persia, in the bosom of luxury and despotism, preserved a strong sense of personal gallantry and national honour. From the age of seven years they were taught to speak truth, to shoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was universally confessed that in the two last of these arts they had made a more than common proficiency.[57] The most distinguished youth were educated under the monarch's eye, practised their exercises in the gate of his palace, and were severely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience in their long and laborious parties of hunting. In every province the satrap maintained a like school of military virtue. The Persian nobles (so natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received from the king's bounty lands and houses on the condition of their service in war. They were ready on the first summons to mount on horseback, with a martial and splendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully selected from among the most robust slaves and the bravest adventurers of Asia. These armies, both of light and of heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuosity of their charge and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eastern provinces of the declining empire of Rome.[58] [a]

Their cavalry excellent.

[56] Herodian, l. vi. [c. 5] p. 214. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxiii. c. 6. Some differences may be observed between the two historians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half.

[57] The Persians are still the most skilful horsemen, and their horses the finest, in the East.

[58] From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin, &c., I have extracted such *probable* accounts of the Persian nobility as seem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Sassanides.

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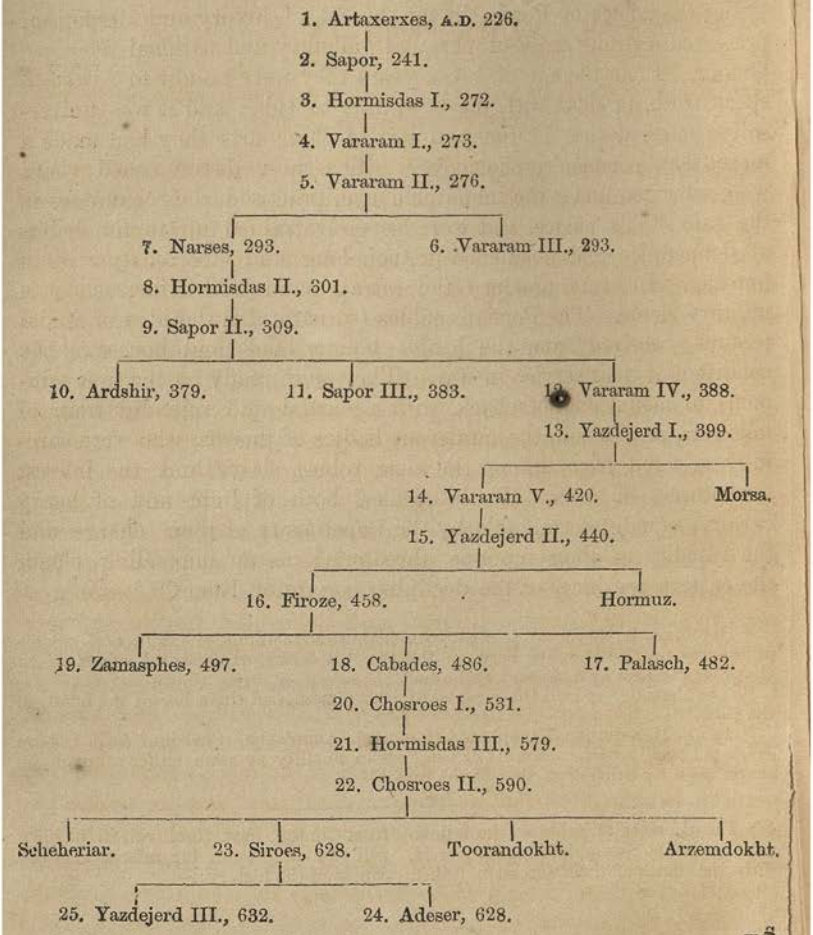
[a] The genealogical table on the following page, of the Sassanidan kings of Persia, with the dates of their accession (taken from Clinton, Fast. Rom. vol. ii. p. 263), will be found useful for reference in the course of the history:—

TABLE.


1. Artaxerxes, A.D. 226.
2. Sapor, 241.
3. Hormisdas I., 272.
4. Vararam I., 273.
5. Vararam II., 276.
7. Narses, 293.
6. Vararam III., 293.
8. Hormisdas II., 301.
9. Sapor II., 309.
10. Ardshir, 379.
11. Sapor III., 383.
12. Vararam IV., 388.
13. Yazdejerd I., 399.
14. Vararam V., 420.
Morsa.
15. Yazdejerd II., 440.
16. Firoze, 458.
Hormuz.
19. Zamasphes, 497.
18. Cabades, 486.
17. Palasch, 482.
20. Chosroes I., 531.
21. Hormisdas III., 579.
22. Chosroes II., 590.
Scheheriar.
23. Siroes, 628.
Toorandokht.
Arzemdokht.
25. Yazdejerd III., 632.
24. Adeser, 628.

—S.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STATE OF GERMANY TILL THE INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR DECIUS.

THE government and religion of Persia have deserved some notice, from their connection with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We shall occasionally mention the Scythian or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horses, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immense plains which spread themselves from the Caspian Sea to the Vistula, from the confines of Persia to those of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned the Western monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and, if we may use the expression, a more domestic, claim to our attention and regard. The most civilised nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany; and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners. In their primitive state of simplicity and independence, the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil, of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressive conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so frequently, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power.

Extent of Germany.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language denoted a common origin, and preserved a

striking resemblance.[a] On the west, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south by the Danube from the Illyrian, provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian Mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations. In the remote darkness of the north the ancients imperfectly descried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic Sea, and beyond the peninsula, or islands,[1] of Scandinavia.

Climate.

Some ingenious writers[2] have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present; and the most ancient descriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of intense frost and eternal winter are perhaps little to be regarded, since we have no method of reducing to the accurate standard of the thermometer the feelings or the expressions of an orator born in the happier regions of Greece or Asia. But I shall select two remarkable circumstances of a less equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their

[1] The modern philosophers of Sweden seem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually sink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to estimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago the flat country of Scandinavia must have been covered by the sea; while the high lands rose above the waters, as so many islands of various forms and dimensions. Such, indeed, is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vast countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv., a large abstract of Dalin's History of Sweden, composed in the Swedish language.[b]

[2] In particular, Mr. Hume, the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, Hist. des Celtes, tom. i.

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[a] Gibbon, following Tacitus, assigns to ancient Germany too great an extent. Tacitus must have derived his knowledge of the countries east of the Elbe only from hearsay; and therefore his statements respecting the people east of this river must be received with great caution. Indeed, there is good reason for believing that almost the whole of the country east of the Elbe was in the earliest historical period inhabited by Slavonians, and not by Germans. It may be proved that the tract of country between the Elbe and the Vistula was peopled by Slavonians in the ninth and tenth centuries; and we have no historical accounts, and no traditions, of the expulsion of Germans from this tract by Slavonians between the time of Tacitus and the tenth century. The subject is investigated with learning and accuracy by Dr. Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Prolegom. p. xvi. *seq.*—S.

[b] Modern geologists have rejected this theory of the depression of the Baltic as inconsistent with recent observation. The considerable changes which have taken place on its shores, Sir C. Lyell, from actual observation, now decidedly attributes to the regular and uniform elevation of the land.—Lyell's Geology, b. ii. c. 17. —M.

numerous armies, their cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vast and solid bridge of ice.[3] Modern ages have not presented an instance of a like phænomenon. 2. The reindeer, that useful animal, from whom the savage of the North derives the best comforts of his dreary life, is of a constitution that supports, and even requires, the most intense cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the Pole ; he seems to delight in the snows of Lapland and Siberia : but at present he cannot subsist, much less multiply, in any country to the south of the Baltic.[4] In the time of Cæsar the reindeer, as well as the elk and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which then overshadowed a great part of Germany and Poland.[5] The modern improvements sufficiently explain the causes of the diminution of the cold. These immense woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays of the sun.[6] The morasses have been drained, and, in proportion as the soil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although situated in the same parallel with the finest provinces of France and England, that country experiences the most rigorous cold. The reindeer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and lasting snow, and the great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a season when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are usually free from ice.[7]

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and

Its effects on the natives.

[3] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. [c. 25] p. 340, edit. Wessel. Herodian, l. vi. [c. 7] p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *frusta vini*. Ovid. Epist. ex Ponto, l. iv. 7, 7-10. Virgil. Georgic. l. iii. 355. The fact is confirmed by a soldier and a philosopher who had experienced the intense cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabasis, l. vii. [c. 4] p. 560, edit. Hutchinson.[a]

[4] Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. xii. p. 79, 116.

[5] Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 25, &c. The most inquisitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmost limits, although some of them had travelled in it more than sixty days' journey.

[6] Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 47) investigates the small and scattered remains of the Hercynian wood.

[7] Charlevoix, Histoire du Canada.

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[a] The Danube is constantly frozen over. At Pesth the bridge is usually taken up, and the traffic and communication between the two banks carried on over the ice. The Rhine is likewise in many parts passable, at least two years out of five. Winter campaigns are so unusual in modern warfare, that I recollect but one instance of an *army* crossing either river on the ice. In the thirty years' war (1635), Jan van Werth, an Imperialist partisan, crossed the Rhine from Heidelberg on the ice with 5000 men, and surprised Spires. Pichegru's memorable campaign (1794-5), when the freezing of the Meuse and Waal opened Holland to his conquests, and his cavalry and artillery attacked the ships frozen in on the Zuyder Zee, was in a winter of unprecedented severity. — M. 1845.

most have allowed, though, as it should seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the North was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climates.[8] We may assert with greater confidence that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the South,[9] gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy children of the North,[10] who, in their turn, were unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved away in languor and sickness under the beams of an Italian sun.[11]

Origin of the Germans.

There is not anywhere upon the globe a large tract of country which we have discovered destitute of inhabitants, or whose first population can be fixed with any degree of historical certainty. And yet, as the most philosophic minds can seldom refrain from investigating the infancy of great nations, our curiosity consumes itself in toilsome and disappointed efforts. When Tacitus considered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aspect of the country, he was disposed to pronounce those barbarians *Indigenæ*, or natives of the soil. We may allow with safety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies already formed into a political society;[12] but that the name and nation received their existence from the gradual union of some wandering savages of the Hercynian woods. To assert those savages to have been the spontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited would be a rash inference, condemned by religion, and unwarranted by reason.

[8] Olaus Rudbeck asserts that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be suspected.

[9] In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt. Tacit. Germania, c. 20. Cluver. l. i. c. 14.

[10] Plutarch. in Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amusement, often slid down mountains of snow on their broad shields.

[11] The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent discipline were in a great measure preserved in health and vigour. It may be remarked that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog seems to approach the nearest to our species in that privilege.

[12] Tacit. Germ. c. 2. The emigration of the Gauls followed the course of the Danube, and discharged itself on Greece and Asia. Tacitus could discover only one inconsiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin.[a]

[a] The Gothini, whom Tacitus distinguishes from the Gothi, and whom he places behind the Marcomanni and Quadi. (Tacit. Germ. c. 43.) But the improbability of an isolated Gallic people in this district is very great: and it has therefore

Such rational doubt is but ill suited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Mosaic history of the world, the ark of Noah has been of the same use as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the siege of Troy. On a narrow basis of acknowledged truth an immense but rude superstructure of fable has been erected; and the wild Irishman,[13] as well as the wild Tartar,[14] could point out the individual son of Japhet from whose loins his ancestors were lineally descended. The last century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and easy faith, who by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great-grandchildren of Noah from the Tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of these judicious critics, one of the most entertaining was Olaus Rudbeck, professor in the university of Upsal.[15] Whatever is celebrated either in history or fable this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves derived their alphabetical characters, their astronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for such it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, and even the Elysian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime so profusely favoured by Nature could not long remain desert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thousand persons. He then disperses them into small colonies to replenish the earth, and to propagate the human species. The German or Swedish detachment (which marched, if I am not mistaken, under the command of Askenaz the son of Gomer, the son of Japhet) distinguished itself by a more than common diligence in the prosecution of this great work. The northern hive cast its swarms over the greatest part of Europe, Africa, and Asia; and (to use the

Fables and conjectures.

[13] According to Dr. Keating (History of Ireland, p. 13, 14), the giant Partholanus, who was the son of Seara, the son of Esra, the son of Sru, the son of Framant, the son of Fathaclan, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, landed on the coast of Munster, the 14th day of May, in the year of the world one thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight. Though he succeeded in his great enterprise, the loose behaviour of his wife rendered his domestic life very unhappy, and provoked him to such a degree, that he killed—her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned historian very properly observes, was the *first* instance of female falsehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.

[14] Genealogical History of the Tartars by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan.

[15] His work, entitled Atlantica, is uncommonly scarce. Bayle has given two most curious extracts from it. République des Lettres, Janvier et Février, 1685.

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been conjectured, with much probability, that they spoke the Galician (a Lithuanian) language, and that this name was confounded by Tacitus with the better known name of Gallican. See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, p. 156.—S.

author's metaphor) the blood circulated from the extremities to the heart.

The Germans ignorant of letters;

But all this well-laboured system of German antiquities is annihilated by a single fact, too well attested to admit of any doubt, and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the use of letters;[16] and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilised people from a herd of savages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved society, to calculate the immense distance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peasant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in distant ages and remote countries; whilst the latter, rooted to a single spot, and confined to a few years of existence, surpasses but very little his fellow-labourer the ox in the exercise of his mental faculties. The same, and even a greater difference, will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may safely pronounce, that without some species of writing no people has ever preserved the faithful annals of their history, ever made any con-

[16] Tacit. Germ. c. 19. Literarum secreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant. We may rest contented with this decisive authority, without entering into the obscure disputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celsius, a Swede, a scholar, and a philosopher, was of opinion that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into straight lines for the ease of engraving. See Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, l. ii. c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldest Runic inscriptions are supposed to be of the third century, and the most ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. vii. 18), who lived towards the end of the sixth century.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis.[a]

[a] The obscure subject of the Runic characters has exercised the industry and ingenuity of the modern scholars of the North. There are three distinct theories; one, maintained by Schlözer (Nordische Geschichte, p. 481, &c.), who considers their sixteen letters to be a corruption of the Roman alphabet, post-Christian in their date, and Schlözer would attribute their introduction into the North to the Alemanni. The second, that of Frederick Schlegel (Vorlesungen über alte und neue Literatur), supposes that these characters were left on the coasts of the Mediterranean and Northern Seas by the Phœnicians, preserved by the priestly castes, and employed for purposes of magic. Their common origin from the Phœnician would account for their similarity to the Roman letters. The last, to which we incline, claims a much higher and more venerable antiquity for the Runic, and supposes them to have been the original characters of the Indo-Teutonic tribes, brought from the East, and preserved among the different races of that stock. See Ueber Deutsche Runen, von W. C. Grimm, 1821. A Memoir by Dr. Legis, Fundgruben des alten Nordens. Foreign Quarterly Review, vol. ix. p. 438.—M.

siderable progress in the abstract sciences, or ever possessed, in any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and agreeable arts of life.

Of these arts the ancient Germans were wretchedly destitute. They passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty, of arts and agriculture; which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity.[a] Modern Germany is said to contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns.[17] In a much wider extent of country the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places which he decorates with the name of cities;[18] though, according to our ideas, they would but ill deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion.[19] But Tacitus asserts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities;[20] and that they affected to despise the works of Roman industry as places of confinement rather than of security.[21] Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas;[22] each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the spot to which a plain, a wood, or a stream of fresh water, had induced him to give the preference. Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in these slight habitations.[23] They were indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with straw, and pierced at the top to leave a free passage for the smoke. In the most inclement winter the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. The nations who dwelt towards the North clothed themselves in furs; and the women manufactured for

[17] Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not misinformed, a German by birth. [De Pauw.]

[18] The Alexandrian geographer is often criticised by the accurate Cluverius.

[19] See Cæsar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker in his History of Manchester, vol. i.

[20] Tacit. Germ. 16.

[21] When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to cast off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to resume their ancient manners, they insisted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Postulamus a vobis, muros "coloniæ, munimenta servitii, detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis "obliviscuntur." Tacit. Hist. iv. 64.

[22] The straggling villages of Silesia are several miles in length. See Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

[23] One hundred and forty years after Tacitus a few more regular structures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian, l. vii. [c. 2] p. 234.

[a] Luden (the author of the Geschichte des Teutschen Volkes) has surpassed most writers in his patriotic enthusiasm for the virtues and noble manners of his ancestors. Even the cold of the climate, and the want of vines and fruit-trees, as well as the barbarism of the inhabitants, are calumnies of the luxurious Italians. M. Guizot, on the other side (in his Histoire de la Civilisation, vol. i. p. 272, &c.), has drawn a curious parallel between the Germans of Tacitus and the North American Indians.—M.

their own use a coarse kind of linen.[24] The game of various sorts with which the forests of Germany were plentifully stocked supplied its inhabitants with food and exercise.[25] Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility,[26] formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth: the use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes by suffering a great part of their territory to lie waste and without tillage.[27]

and of the use of metals.

Gold, silver, and iron were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and prized their rude earthen vessels as of equal value with the silver vases, the presents of Rome to their princes and ambassadors.[28] To a mind capable of reflection such leading facts convey more instruction than a tedious detail of subordinate circumstances. The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. The use of gold and silver is in a great measure factitious; but it would be impossible to enumerate the important and various services which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and fashioned by the operation of fire and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the most universal incitement, iron the most powerful instrument, of human industry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the

[24] Tacit. Germ. 17.
[25] Cæsar. de Bell. Gall. vi. 21.
[26] Tacit. Germ. 5.
[27] Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæsar, vi. 22.
[28] Tacit. Germ. 5.

one nor seconded by the other, could emerge from the grossest barbarism.[29]

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilised state every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can however fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies of social life. The Germans were not possessed of these varied resources. The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diversity of nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkest recesses), the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They delight in sloth, they detest tranquillity.[30] The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence. In the dull intervals of peace these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.[31] Their debts of honour (for in that light they have transmitted to us those of play) they discharged with the most romantic fidelity. The desperate gamester, who had staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound,

Their indolence.

[29] It is said that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the use of either money or iron, had made a very great progress in the arts. Those arts, and the monuments they produced, have been strangely magnified. See Recherches sur les Américains, tom. ii. p. 153, &c.

[30] Tacit. Germ. 15.

[31] Tacit. Germ. 22, 23.

chastised, and sold into remote slavery by his weaker but more lucky antagonist.[32]

Their taste for strong liquors.

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is strongly expressed by Tacitus) into a certain semblance of wine, was sufficient for the gross purposes of German debauchery. But those who had tasted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, sighed for that more delicious species of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has since been executed with so much success), to naturalise the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure by industry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To solicit by labour what might be ravished by arms was esteemed unworthy of the German spirit.[33] The intemperate thirst of strong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had bestowed those much envied presents. The Tuscan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations attracted them into Italy by the prospect of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate.[34] And in the same manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, were allured by the promise of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champagne and Burgundy.[35] Drunkenness, the most illiberal, but not the most dangerous of *our* vices, was sometimes capable, in a less civilised state of mankind, of occasioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

State of population.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the soil fertilised, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The same extent of ground which at present maintains, in ease and plenty, a million of husbandmen and artificers, was unable to supply an hundred thousand lazy warriors with the simple necessaries of life.[36] The Germans abandoned their immense forests to the exercise of hunting, employed in pasturage the most considerable part of their lands, bestowed on the small remainder a rude and careless cultivation, and then accused the scantiness and sterility of a country that refused to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine severely admonished them of the importance of the arts, the national distress was sometimes

[32] Tacit. Germ. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *passion* is wonderfully inherent in the human species.

[33] Tacit. Germ. 14. [34] Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. v. 33.

[35] Dubos, Hist. de la Monarchie Françoise, tom. i. p. 193.

[36] The Helvetian nation, which issued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and sex, 368,000 persons (Cæsar de Bell. Gall. i. 29). At present the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a small district on the banks of the Leman Lake, much more distinguished for politeness than for industry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent tract of M. Muret, in the Mémoires de la Société de Bern.

alleviated by the emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth.[37] The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilised people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they most valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vast silence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conquest. The innumerable swarms that issued, or seemed to issue, from the great storehouse of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquished and by the credulity of succeeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually established, and has been supported by writers of distinguished reputation, that, in the age of Cæsar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the North were far more numerous than they are in our days.[38] A more serious inquiry into the causes of population seems to have convinced modern philosophers of the falsehood, and indeed the impossibility, of the supposition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel[39] we can oppose the equal names of Robertson and Hume.[40]

German freedom.

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest fetters of despotism. "Among the Suiones (says Tacitus) riches are "held in honour. They are *therefore* subject to an absolute monarch, "who, instead of intrusting his people with the free use of arms, as "is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe "custody not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a slave. "The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below "servitude; they obey a woman."[41] In the mention of these exceptions the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loss to conceive by what means riches and despotism could penetrate into a remote corner of the North, and extinguish the generous flame that blazed with such fierceness on the frontier of the Roman provinces, or how the ancestors

[37] Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the rest of Paul's followers, represent these emigrations too much as regular and concerted measures.

[38] Sir William Temple and Montesquieu have indulged, on this subject, the usual liveliness of their fancy.

[39] Machiavel, Hist. di Firenze, l. i. Mariana, Hist. Hispan. l. v. c. 1.

[40] Robertson's Charles V. Hume's Political Essays.[a]

[41] Tacit. German. 44, 45. Freinshemius (who dedicated his Supplement to Livy to Christina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expressed so very little reverence for Northern queens.

[a] It is a wise observation of Malthus, that these nations were not populous in proportion to the land they occupied, but to the food they produced. They were prolific from their pure morals and constitutions, but their institutions were not calculated to produce food for those whom they brought into being.—M. 1845.

of those Danes and Norwegians, so distinguished in latter ages by their unconquered spirit, could thus tamely resign the great character of German liberty.[42] Some tribes, however, on the coast of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquishing the rights of men,[43] but in the far greater part of Germany the form of government was a democracy, tempered, indeed, and controlled, not so much by general and positive laws as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or superstition.[44]

Assemblies of the people.

Civil governments, in their first institutions, are voluntary associations for mutual defence. To obtain the desired end it is absolutely necessary that each individual should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates. The German tribes were contented with this rude but liberal outline of political society. As soon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was introduced into the general council of his countrymen, solemnly invested with a shield and spear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The assembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at stated seasons, or on sudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magistrates, and the great business of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, these important questions were previously considered and prepared in a more select council of the principal chieftains.[45] The magistrates might deliberate and persuade, the people only could resolve and execute; and the resolutions of the Germans were for the most part hasty and violent. Barbarians accustomed to place their freedom in gratifying the present passion, and their courage in overlooking all future consequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonstrances of justice and policy, and it was the practice to signify by a hollow murmur their dislike of such timid councils. But whenever a more popular orator proposed to vindicate the meanest citizen from either foreign or domestic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to assert the national honour, or to pursue some enterprise full of danger and glory, a loud clashing of shields and spears expressed the eager applause of the assembly. For the Germans

[42] May we not suspect that superstition was the parent of despotism? The descendants of Odin (whose race was not extinct till the year 1060) are said to have reigned in Sweden above a thousand years. The temple of Upsal was the ancient seat of religion and empire. In the year 1153 I find a singular law prohibiting the use and profession of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old institution? See Dalin's History of Sweden in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv.

[43] Tacit. Germ. c. 43. [44] Id. c. 11, 12, 13, &c.

[45] Grotius changes an expression of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *prætractantur*. The correction is equally just and ingenious.

always met in arms, and it was constantly to be dreaded lest an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and strong liquors, should use those arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious resolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and seditious.[46]

Authority of the princes and magistrates

A general of the tribe was elected on occasions of danger; and, if the danger was pressing and extensive, several tribes concurred in the choice of the same general. The bravest warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was still invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any supreme chief.[47] *Princes* were, however, appointed in the general assembly to administer justice, or rather to compose differences,[48] in their respective districts. In the choice of these magistrates as much regard was shown to birth as to merit.[49] To each was assigned, by the public, a guard and a council of an hundred persons, and the first of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour which sometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title.[50]

more absolute over the property than over the persons of the Germans.

The comparative view of the powers of the magistrates, in two remarkable instances, is alone sufficient to represent the whole system of German manners. The disposal of the landed property within their district was absolutely vested in their hands, and they distributed it every year according to a new division.[51] At the same time they were not authorised to punish with death, to imprison, or even to strike a private citizen.[52] A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.

Voluntary engagements.

The Germans respected only those duties which they imposed on themselves. The most obscure soldier resisted with disdain the authority of the magistrates. "The noblest youths "blushed not to be numbered among the faithful companions of some "renowned chief to whom they devoted their arms and service. A "noble emulation prevailed among the companions to obtain the first "place in the esteem of their chief; amongst the chiefs, to acquire

[46] Even in *our* ancient parliament the barons often carried a question, not so much by the number of votes as by that of their armed followers.
[47] Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 23.
[48] Minuunt controversias, is a very happy expression of Cæsar's.
[49] Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. Tacit. Germ. 7.
[50] Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. i. c. 38.
[51] Cæsar, vi. 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.
[52] Tacit. Germ. 7.

"the greatest number of valiant companions. To be ever surrounded "by a band of select youths was the pride and strength of the "chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence in war. The glory of "such distinguished heroes diffused itself beyond the narrow limits "of their own tribe. Presents and embassies solicited their friend- "ship, and the fame of their arms often ensured victory to the party "which they espoused. In the hour of danger it was shameful for "the chief to be surpassed in valour by his companions; shameful for "the companions not to equal the valour of their chief. To survive "his fall in battle was indelible infamy. To protect his person, and "to adorn his glory with the trophies of their own exploits, were the "most sacred of their duties. The chiefs combated for victory, the "companions for the chief. The noblest warriors, whenever their "native country was sunk in the laziness of peace, maintained their "numerous bands in some distant scene of action, to exercise their "restless spirit, and to acquire renown by voluntary dangers. Gifts "worthy of soldiers, the warlike steed, the bloody and ever victorious "lance, were the rewards which the companions claimed from the "liberality of their chief. The rude plenty of his hospitable board "was the only pay that *he* could bestow, or *they* would accept. War, "rapine, and the free-will offerings of his friends supplied the "materials of this munificence."[53] This institution, however it might accidentally weaken the several republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongst them all the virtues of which barbarians are susceptible—the faith and valour, the hospitality and the courtesy, so conspicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry. The honourable gifts bestowed by the chief on his brave companions have been supposed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the first rudiments of the fiefs, distributed, after the conquest of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vassals, with a similar duty of homage and military service.[54] These conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual presents, but without either imposing or accepting the weight of obligations.[55]

German chastity.

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly of romance, all the men "were brave and all the women were chaste;" and notwithstanding the latter of these virtues is acquired and preserved with much more difficulty than the former, it is ascribed, almost

[53] Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

[54] Esprit des Loix, l. xxx. c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Montesquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reason of the Abbé de Mably. Observations sur l'Histoire de France, tom. i. p. 356.

[55] Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur. Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in use, except among the princes, and among them only for the sake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were punished as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was seduction justified by example and fashion.[56] We may easily discover that Tacitus indulges an honest pleasure in the contrast of barbarian virtue with the dissolute conduct of the Roman ladies: yet there are some striking circumstances that give an air of truth, or at least of probability, to the conjugal faith and chastity of the Germans.

Its probable causes.

Although the progress of civilisation has undoubtedly contributed to assuage the fiercer passions of human nature, it seems to have been less favourable to the virtue of chastity, whose most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes. The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised, by sentimental passion. The elegance of dress, of motion, and of manners, gives a lustre to beauty and inflames the senses through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious spectacles, present at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty.[57] From such dangers the unpolished wives of the barbarians were secured by poverty, solitude, and the painful cares of a domestic life. The German huts, open on every side to the eye of indiscretion or jealousy, were a better safeguard of conjugal fidelity than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Persian haram. To this reason another may be added of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human. Some of these interpreters of fate, such as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fiercest nations of Germany.[58] The rest of the sex, without being adored as goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated even by the marriage ceremony to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.[59] In their great invasions the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidst the sound of arms, the various

[56] The adulteress was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inspire compassion, or procure her a second husband. Tacit. Germ. c. 18, 19.

[57] Ovid employs two hundred lines in the research of places the most favourable to love. Above all, he considers the theatre as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderness and sensuality.

[58] Tacit. Hist. iv. 61, 65.

[59] The marriage present was a yoke of oxen, horses, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is somewhat too florid on the subject.

forms of destruction, and the honourable wounds of their sons and husbands.[60] Fainting armies of Germans have, more than once, been driven back upon the enemy by the generous despair of the women, who dreaded death much less than servitude. If the day was irrecoverably lost, they well knew how to deliver themselves and their children, with their own hands, from an insulting victor.[61] Heroines of such a cast may claim our admiration; but they were most assuredly neither lovely nor very susceptible of love. Whilst they affected to emulate the stern virtues of *man*, they must have resigned that attractive softness in which principally consist the charm and weakness of *woman*. Conscious pride taught the German females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity. The sentiments and conduct of these high-spirited matrons may, at once, be considered as a cause, as an effect, and as a proof of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raised by fanaticism or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that distinguishes the age or country in which it may be found.

Religion.

The religious system of the Germans (if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance.[62] They adored the great visible objects and agents of nature, the Sun and the Moon, the Fire and the Earth; together with those imaginary deities who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superior beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion entertained by that people of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple which arose not so much from a superiority of reason as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, con-

[60] The change of *exigere* into *exsugere* is a most excellent correction. [There is no necessity for this correction.—S.]

[61] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch. in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones destroyed themselves and their children, they had offered to surrender, on condition that they should be received as the slaves of the vestal virgins.

[62] Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obscure subject. The former discovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is positive that, under the emblems of the sun, the moon, and the fire, his pious ancestors worshipped the Trinity in unity.

secrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror;[63] and the priests, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

Its effects in peace;

The same ignorance which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the useful restraints of laws, exposes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of superstition. The German priests, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had assumed a jurisdiction even in temporal concerns which the magistrate could not venture to exercise; and the haughty warrior patiently submitted to the lash of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war.[64] The defects of civil policy were sometimes supplied by the interposition of ecclesiastical authority. The latter was constantly exerted to maintain silence and decency in the popular assemblies; and was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *Earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress the sound of war was hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony.[65] The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custom.[66]

in war.

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame than to moderate the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises, by the approbation of Heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle;[67] and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder.[68] In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins.

[63] The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany.

[64] Tacit. Germania, c. 7.

[65] Tacit. Germania, c. 40.

[66] See Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. i. note 10.

[67] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts.

[68] See an instance of this custom, Tacit. Annal. xiii. 57.

A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch who had lost his shield was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration,[69] others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness.[70] All agreed that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.

The bards.

The immortality so vainly promised by the priests was, in some degree, conferred by the bards. That singular order of men has most deservedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to investigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been sufficiently illustrated. But we cannot so easily express, or even conceive, the enthusiasm of arms and glory which they kindled in the breast of their audience. Among a polished people, a taste for poetry is rather an amusement of the fancy than a passion of the soul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruse the combats described by Homer or Tasso, we are insensibly seduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the sensation which a peaceful mind can receive from solitary study! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feast of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of the heroes of ancient days, the ancestors of those warlike chieftains who listened with transport to their artless but animated strains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military song; and the passions which it tended to excite, the desire of fame and the contempt of death, were the habitual sentiments of a German mind.[71 a]

[69] Cæsar, Diodorus, and Lucan, seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls, but M. Pelloutier (Histoire des Celtes, l. iii. c. 18) labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense.

[70] Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see Fable xx. in the curious version of that book published by M. Mallet in his Introduction to the History of Denmark.

[71] See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diod. Sicul. l. v. [c. 29.] Strabo, l. iv. p. 197. The classical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phæacian court, and the ardour infused by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the same people. Much learned trifling might be spared if our antiquarians would condescend to reflect that similar manners will naturally be produced by similar situations.

[a] Besides these battle-songs, the Germans sang at their festival banquets (Tac. Ann. i. 65) and around the bodies of their slain heroes. King Theodoric, of the tribe of the Goths, killed in a battle against Attila, was honoured by songs while he was borne from the field of battle. Jornandes, c. 41. The same honour was paid to the remains of Attila. *Ibid.* c. 49. According to some historians, the Germans had songs also at their weddings: but this appears to me inconsistent with their customs, in which marriage was no more than the purchase of a wife. Be-

Such was the situation and such were the manners of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their sense of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirst of enterprise, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find that, during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapsed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, these formidable barbarians made few considerable attempts, and not any material impression, on the luxurious and enslaved provinces of the empire. Their progress was checked by their want of arms and discipline, and their fury was diverted by the intestine divisions of ancient Germany.

Causes which checked the progress of the Germans.

I. It has been observed, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron soon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike destitute of both those valuable metals, were reduced slowly to acquire, by their unassisted strength, the possession of the one as well as the other. The face of a German army displayed their poverty of iron. Swords and the longer kind of lances they could seldom use. Their *framecæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long spears headed with a sharp but narrow iron point, and which, as occasion required, they either darted from a distance, or pushed in close onset. With this spear and with a shield their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, scattered[72] with incredible force, were an additional resource of the infantry. Their military dress, when they wore any, was nothing more than a loose mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or osier shields. Few of the chiefs were distinguished by cuirasses, scarce any by helmets. Though the horses of Germany were neither beautiful, swift, nor practised in the skilful evolutions of the Roman manage, several of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal strength of the Germans consisted in their infantry,[73] which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts

Want of arms, and of discipline.

[72] Missilia spargunt, Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that historian used a vague expression, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

[73] It was their principal distinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback.

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sides, there is but one instance of this, that of the Gothic king Ataulph, who sang himself the nuptial hymn when he espoused Placidia, sister of the emperors Arcadius and Honorius (Olympiodor. p. 8): but this marriage was celebrated according to the Roman rites, of which the nuptial songs formed a part. Adelung, p. 382.—G.

Charlemagne is said to have collected the national songs of the ancient Germans. Eginhard, Vit. Car. Mag.—M.

and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we recollect the complete armour of the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a just matter of surprise how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field the strength of the legions and the various troops of the auxiliaries which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient.[74] During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius,[75] formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed their fortified camps, and employed against the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their service. When at length, after an obstinate struggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis secured himself and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians still continued to occupy the islands of the Rhine,[76] the allies, not the servants, of the Roman monarchy.

Civil dissensions of Germany.

II. The strength of ancient Germany appears formidable when we consider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might very possibly contain a million of warriors, as all who were of age to bear arms were of a temper to use them. But this fierce multitude,

[74] The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Henry Saville has observed several inaccuracies.

[75] Tacit. Hist. iv. 13. Like them, he had lost an eye.

[76] It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they subsisted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. l. iii. c. 30, 37.

incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatness, was agitated by various and often hostile intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent states; and even in each state the union of the several tribes was extremely loose and precarious. The barbarians were easily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much less an insult; their resentments were bloody and implacable. The casual disputes that so frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking were sufficient to inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any considerable chieftains diffused itself among their followers and allies. To chastise the insolent, or to plunder the defenceless, were alike causes of war. The most formidable states of Germany affected to encompass their territories with a wide frontier of solitude and devastation. The awful distance preserved by their neighbours attested the terror of their arms, and in some measure defended them from the danger of unexpected incursions.[77]

"The Bructeri (it is Tacitus who now speaks) were totally exter- "minated by the neighbouring tribes,[78] provoked by their "insolence, allured by the hopes of spoil, and perhaps in- "spired by the tutelar deities of the empire. Above sixty "thousand barbarians were destroyed, not by the Roman arms, but in "our sight and for our entertainment. May the nations, enemies of "Rome, ever preserve this enmity to each other! We have now "attained the utmost verge of prosperity,[79] and have nothing left to "demand of fortune except the discord of the barbarians."[80] These sentiments, less worthy of the humanity than of the patriotism of Tacitus, express the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it a much safer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whose defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negotiations of Rome insinuated themselves into the heart of Germany, and every art of seduction was used with dignity to conciliate those nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the most useful friends as well as the most troublesome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the most trifling presents, which they received either as marks of distinction or as the instruments of luxury.

fomented by the policy of Rome.

[77] Cæsar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. 23.

[78] They are mentioned, however, in the ivth and vth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, &c., as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. 13.

[79] *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good sense, Lipsius, and some MSS., declare for *Vergentibus*. [The common reading *urgentibus* gives a good sense: see Orelli, *ad loc.*—S.]

[80] Tacit. Germania. c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, &c. &c.

In civil dissensions the weaker faction endeavoured to strengthen its interest by entering into secret connections with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome, and every plan of union and public good was defeated by the stronger bias of private jealousy and interest.[81]

Transient union against Marcus Antoninus.

The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus comprehended almost all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube.[82] It is impossible for us to determine whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity, by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence nor provoked by the ambition of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni,[83] who had taken the lead in the war, were the most severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles[84] from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages and useful as soldiers.[85] On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor resolved to reduce their country into the form of a province. His designs were disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the

[81] Many traces of this policy may be discovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

[82] Hist. August. p. 31. [Capitol. M. Ant. Phil. c. 22.] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi. c. 5. Aurel. Victor. [de Cæsar. c. 16.] The emperor Marcus was reduced to sell the rich furniture of the palace, and to enlist slaves and robbers.

[83] The Marcomanni, a colony who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Maroboduus. See Strabo, l. vii. [p. 290.] Vell. Pat. ii. 108. Tacit. Annal. ii. 63.[a]

[84] Mr. Wotton (History of Rome, p. 166) increases the prohibition to ten times the distance. His reasoning is specious, but not conclusive. Five miles were sufficient for a fortified barrier.

[85] Dion, l. lxxi. [c. 11, *sqq.*] and lxxii. [c. 2.]

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[a] The name *Marc-o-manni*, the *March-men* or borderers, appears to have been given to different tribes on the different marches or confines of Germany, and not to have been the name of one and the same people. Since there were Marcomanni in the army of Ariovistus on the Rhine (Cæs. Bell. Gall. i. c. 51), it was inferred, as Gibbon has stated in his note, that the Marcomanni of Maroboduus were a colony from the Marcomanni on the Rhine; but there may have been no connection between them, the Marcomanni of Ariovistus being the Marchmen of the Gallic march, and the Marcomanni of Maroboduus being the Marchmen of the Rhæto-Pannonian march. See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Proleg. p. liii. *seq.*—S.

two first centuries of the Imperial history, was entirely dissipated without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

In the course of this introductory chapter we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient, or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long-forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a common denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves, and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire.[86] Distinction of the German tribes.

Wars and the administration of public affairs are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy scenes is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the writer, as well as of the reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics,[87] raises almost every member of the com- Numbers.

[86] See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. p. 48–71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

[87] Should we suspect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 39,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.[a]

[a] This number, though too positively stated, is probably not far wrong as an average estimate. On the subject of Athenian population, see St. Croix, Acad. des Inscrip. xlviii.; Böckh, Public Economy of Athens, i. 47, Eng. trans.; Fynes Clinton, Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. p. 381. The latter author estimates the citizens of Sparta at 33,000.—M.

munity into action, and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions and the restless motions of the people of Germany dazzle our imagination, and seem to multiply their numbers. The profuse enumeration of kings and warriors, of armies and nations, inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

CHAPTER X.

THE EMPERORS DECIUS, GALLUS, ÆMILIANUS, VALERIAN, AND GALLIENUS — THE GENERAL IRRUPTION OF THE BARBARIANS — THE THIRTY TYRANTS.

FROM the great secular games celebrated by Philip, to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times and the scarcity of authentic memorials oppose equal difficulties to the historian who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture; and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supply the want of historical materials. The nature of the subject. A.D. 248-268.

There is not, for instance, any difficulty in conceiving that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate the example of their master; and that the caprice of armies long since habituated to frequent and violent revolutions might every day raise to the throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers. History can only add that the rebellion against the emperor Philip broke out in the summer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæsia, and that a subaltern officer,[1] named Marinus, was the object of their seditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded lest the treason of the Mæsian army should prove the first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted with the consciousness of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of disaffection, till at length Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to discover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed to possess. He The emperor Philip.

Services, revolt, victory, and reign of the emperor Decius, A.D. 249.

[1] The expression used by Zosimus and Zonaras may signify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

treated the whole business with contempt, as a hasty and inconsiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be destroyed by the same inconstancy that had created him. The speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Philip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor, and Decius appeared to him the only person capable of restoring peace and discipline to an army whose tumultuous spirit did not immediately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius,[2] who long resisted his own nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mæsia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were superior in number; but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His son and associate in the empire was massacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Augustus, he had assured Philip by a private message of his innocence and loyalty, solemnly protesting that, on his arrival in Italy, he would resign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere; but in the situation where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven.[3]

Marches against the Goths, A.D. 250.

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the GOTHS. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy.

[2] His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia [near Sirmium—S.] (Eutrop. ix. [c. 4] Victor. in Cæsarib. [c. 29.] et Epitom. [c. 29]), seems to contradict, unless it was merely accidental, his supposed descent from the Decii. Six hundred years had bestowed nobility on the Decii: but at the commencement of that period they were only Plebeians of merit, and among the first who shared the consulship with the haughty Patricians. Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ, &c. Juvenal, Sat. viii. 254. See the spirited speech of Decius, in Livy, x. 7, 8.

[3] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 22] p. 20. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 19] p. 625, edit. Par. [p. 584, edit. Bonn].

So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of GOTHS is frequently but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism.

In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the conquest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and of future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes.[4] These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths from the vast island or peninsula of Scandinavia.[5] [a] That extreme country of the North was not unknown to the con-

Origin of the Goths from Scandinavia.

[4] See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes: it is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers.

[5] On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4.

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[a] The Scandinavian origin of the Goths has given rise to much discussion, and has been denied by several eminent modern scholars. The only reasons in favour of their Scandinavian origin are the testimony of Jornandes, and the existence of the name of Gothland in Sweden; but the testimony of Jornandes contains at the best only the tradition of the people respecting their origin, which is never of much value; and the mere fact of the existence of the name of Gothland in Sweden is not sufficient to prove that this country was the aboriginal abode of the people. When the Romans first saw the Goths, in the reign of Caracalla, they dwelt in the land of the Getæ. Hence Jornandes, Procopius, and many other writers both ancient and modern, supposed the Goths to be the same as the Getæ of the earlier historians. But the latter writers always regarded the Getæ as Thracians; and if their opinion was correct, they could have had no connection with the Goths. Still it is a startling fact, that a nation called Gothi should have emigrated from Germany, and settled *accidentally* in the country of a people with a name so like their own as that of Getæ. This *may* have happened by accident, but certainly all the probabilities are against it. Two hypotheses have been brought forward in modern times to meet this difficulty. One is that of Grimm, in his History of the German Language, who supposes that there was no migration of the Goths at all, that they were on the Lower Danube from the beginning, and that they were known to the earlier Greek and Latin writers as Getæ: but the great objection to this opinion is the general belief of the earlier writers that the Getæ were Thracians, and the latter were certainly not Germans. The other is that of Latham, who supposes, with much ingenuity, that the name of Get, or Goth, was the general name given by the Slavonic nations to the Lithuanians. According to this theory, the Goth-ones, or Guth-ones, at the mouth of the Vistula, mentioned by Tacitus and Ptolemy, are Lithuanians, and the Get-æ, on the Danube, belong to the same nation. Latham also believes that the Goths of a later period were Germans who migrated to the Danube, but that they did not bear the name of Goths till they settled in the country of the Getæ. See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Epil. p. xxxviii. *seq.*—S.

querors of Italy; the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship, and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna.[6] Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century), whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the North, the Goths and the Swedes composed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy.[7] The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world.[8]

Religion of the Goths.

Till the end of the eleventh century a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddess of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival that was solemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple.[9] The only traces that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda,[a] a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned

[6] Jornandes, c. 3.

[7] See in the Prolegomena of Grotius some large extracts from Adam of Bremen and Saxo-Grammaticus. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flourished about the year 1200.

[8] Voltaire, Histoire de Charles XII. l. iii. When the Austrians desired the aid of the court of Rome against Gustavus Adolphus, they always represented that conqueror as the lineal successor of Alaric. Harte's History of Gustavus, vol. ii. p. 123.

[9] See Adam of Bremen in Grotii Prolegomenis, p. 105. The temple of Upsal was destroyed by Ingo, king of Sweden, who began his reign in the year 1075, and about fourscore years afterwards a Christian cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's History of Sweden, in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée.

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[a] The Eddas have at length been made accessible to European scholars by the completion of the publication of the Saemundine Edda by the Arna Magnæan Commission, in 3 vols. 4to., with a copious lexicon of northern mythology.—M.

of Denmark and Sweden, as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin, —the god of war and the great legislator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the North, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes, on either side of the Baltic, were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame which he acquired of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated, during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war.[10] Institutions and death of Odin.

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of As-gard. The happy resemblance of that name with As-burg or As-of,[11] words of a similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the North with servitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind.[12] Agreeable but uncertain hypothesis concerning Odin.

[10] Mallet, Introduction à l'Histoire du Dannemarc.

[11] Mallet, c. iv. p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people.

[12] This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an Epic poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia: from whence the prophet was supposed to descend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden.[a]

[a] Gibbon, at a later period of his work, recanted his opinion of the truth of this expedition of Odin. The Asiatic origin of the Goths is almost certain from the affinity of their language to the Sanscrit and Persian; but their northern migration

Emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia into Prussia.

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels with oars,[13] and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlscroon to the nearest ports of Pomerania and Prussia. Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the Christian æra,[14] and as late as the age of the Antonines,[15] the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Königsberg, and Danzig were long afterwards founded.[16] Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea-coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people.[17] The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ.[18] The distinction among the

[13] Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

[14] Tacit. Annal. ii. 62. If we could yield a firm assent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marseilles, we must allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years before Christ.

[15] Ptolemy, l. ii. [l. iii. 5, § 20.]

[16] By the German colonies who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The conquest and conversion of Prussia were completed by those adventurers in the thirteenth century.

[17] Pliny (Hist. Natur. iv. 14 [28]), and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 2) agree in this opinion. They lived in distant ages, and possessed different means of investigating the truth.[a]

[18] The *Ostro* and *Visi*, the eastern and western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia.[b] In all their future marches and settlements

must have taken place long before the period of history. The transformation of the deity Odin into a warrior chieftain, and the whole legend of his establishment in Scandinavia, is probably a theory of the northern writers, when all mythology was reduced to hero-worship.—M.

[a] This statement may be questioned, notwithstanding the authority of these writers, to which that of Tacitus (*Germ.* c. 2) may be added. But Tacitus and other ancient writers included, under the name of Germans, many nations that were not Germans; and the name of the Vandals is a strong presumption that they were a Slavonic, and not a Germanic people. The Germans have always called all Slavonians Wends or Vends; and it is not improbable that the Vandals were Slavonian Serbs from Saxony and Silesia. It may, however, be readily admitted, that among the Vandal invaders of the Roman empire there were Germanic tribes, and that these Slavonians may have been ruled in ancient times, as they are at the present day, by German princes. The latter supposition would account for the fact that the names of the Vandal leaders are almost exclusively Germanic. See St. Martin's note on Le Beau, vol. v. p. 263; Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Epileg. p. lxxxviii. *seq.*—S.

[b] This statement, which rests solely on the authority of Jornandes, can hardly be admitted; though we do not know when they first obtained these names, probably not till they were in possession of a large extent of country on the Black Sea. The

Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads.[19] In this interval, therefore, of about seventy years we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pestilence or a famine, a victory or a defeat, an oracle of the gods or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the south. Besides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to the most dangerous adventures. The use of round bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings gave uncommon union and stability to their councils;[20] and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant

From Prussia to the Ukraine.

they preserved, with their names, the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The third, being a heavy sailer, lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards swelled into a nation, received from that circumstance the appellation of Gepidæ or Loiterers. Jornandes, c. 17.[a]

[19] See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 346.

[20] Omnium harum gentium insigne, rotunda scuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obsequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

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earliest trace of the name of Visigoths is in Sidonius Apollinaris, who uses *Vesus* as a simple name (Carm. vii. 400, 432): in Cassiodorus (Var. iii. 1, 3) we find Vuisigothi and Vuisigothæ, and in Jornandes Wesegothæ and Wesigothæ. The name of the Ostrogoths occurs earlier, first in the form of Austrogothi (Pollio, Claud. c. 6), and afterwards in that of Ostrogothi (Claudian, in Eutrop. ii. 153). Neither of these names occurs in Zosimus and Ammianus Marcellinus, both of whom, however, make frequent mention of the Grutungi, or Greutungi, and the Thervingi, or Tervingi: it is probable that the Grutungi were the most illustrious tribe among the Ostrogoths, and that the Thervingi occupied the same rank among the Visigoths. Latham, who supposes that the Goths were not called by this name till they reached the land of the Getæ (see note on p. 375), conjectures that their original name when they left Germany was that of Grutungi and Thervingi. See Aschbach, Geschichte der Westgothen, p. 20, *seq.*—S.

[a] It is uncertain whether the Gepidæ were Goths. They are first mentioned by Vopiscus, in his Life of Probus (c. 18), along with the Grautungi and Vandali. Their seat was the Middle Danube, in Dacia, in the parts about Singidunum and Sirmium. Procopius, it is true, makes them Goths (Bell. Vand. i. 2), but he also makes the Alani Goths (Bell. Goth. i. 1); and it is certain that the Alani did not belong to the Gothic race. The close political connexion of the Gepidæ with the Goths may have led to their being regarded as a branch of the latter people. See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Epil. p. lxxxvi.—S.

of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anses*, or demigods of the Gothic nation.[21]

The Gothic nation increases in its march.

The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from all the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common standard of the Goths.[22] The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes.[23] The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction to their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains; the immense tract of land that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi;[24] we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war,[25] and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c., derived its origin from the Germans.[a] With better authority a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the middle ages.[26] But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers.[27] As the Goths

Distinction of Germans and Sarmatians.

[21] Jornandes, c. 13, 14.

[22] The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Mascou's History of the Germans, l. v. A passage in the Augustan History, p. 28 [Capitol. M. Ant. Phil. c. 14], seems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occasioned by the pressure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

[23] D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe. [24] Tacit. Germania, c. 46. [25] Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii. c. 43.

[26] The Venedi, the *Slavi*, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the same people. Jornandes, c. 23.

[27] Tacitus most assuredly deserves that title, and even his cautious suspense is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

[a] It has been disputed between German and French philologists to which race of people the Bastarnæ belonged. Strabo (vii. p. 306), Pliny (iv. 14, s. 28), and Tacitus (Germ. c. 46) call them Germans. But, on the other hand, Polybius (xxvi. 9) calls them Gauls; and Livy, in one passage, calls Clondicus leader of the Bastarnæ (xl. 58), and in another leader of the Gauls (xliv. 26). Plutarch (Æmil. Paul. cc. 9, 12, 13) and Diodorus Siculus (de Virtutibus et Vitiis, vol. ii. p. 580, ed. Wesseling) likewise call them Gauls. Dion Cassius vaguely names them Scythians (li. 23, p. 656). Whether Germans or Gauls, the Bastarnæ must have been immigrants, for the district in which we find them was no part of either the German or Celtic area. See Niebuhr, Kleine Schriften, vol. i. p. 385, *seq.*; Zeuss, Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme, p. 127, *seq.*—S.

advanced near the Euxine Sea they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani,[a] and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we shall discover that those two great portions of human kind were principally distinguished by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a close dress or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of several wives, by a military force consisting, for the most part, either of infantry or cavalry; and, above all, by the use of the Teutonic or of the Sclavonian language; the last of which has been diffused by conquest from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

Description of the Ukraine.

The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers, which, from either side, discharge themselves into the Borysthenes; and interspersed with large and lofty forests of oaks. The plenty of game and fish, the innumerable beehives deposited in the hollow of old trees and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the size of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptness of the soil for every species of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all displayed the liberality of Nature and tempted the industry of man.[28] But the Goths withstood all these temptations, and still adhered to a life of idleness, of poverty, and of rapine.

The Goths invade the Roman provinces.

The Scythian hordes, which, towards the east, bordered on the new settlements of the Goths, presented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the prospect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harvests, sown by the hands of an industrious, and exposed to be gathered by those of a warlike, people. It is probable that the conquests of Trajan, maintained by his successors less for any real advantage than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that side. The new and unsettled province of Dacia was neither strong enough to resist, nor rich enough to satiate, the rapaciousness of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Dniester were considered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifi-

[28] Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii. p. 379) traversed the Ukraine in his journey from Petersburgh to Constantinople. The modern face of the country is a just representation of the ancient, since, in the hands of the Cossacks, it still remains in a state of nature.

[a] On the Alani see ch. xxvi. note 55.—S.

cations of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king, or leader, of that fierce nation, traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Dniester and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mæsia.[29] The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated, rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments scattered devastation over the province of Mæsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Various events of the Gothic war. A.D. 250.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories.[30] On his approach they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater importance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of Mount Hæmus.[31] Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of

[29] In the sixteenth chapter of Jornandes, instead of *secundo* Mæsiam, we may venture to substitute *secundam*, the second Mæsia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (see Hierocles de Provinciis, and Wesseling ad locum, p. 636 Itinerar.). It is surprising how this palpable error of the scribe could escape the judicious correction of Grotius.[a]

[30] The place is still called Nicop. D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 307. The little stream, on whose banks it stood, falls into the Danube.

[31] Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Wesseling, Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd mistake, ascribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predecessor of Decius.

[a] Luden has observed that Jornandes mentions two passages over the Danube; this relates to the *second* irruption into Mæsia. Geschichte des T. V. ii. p. 448.—M.

the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and, for the first time, their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long resistance Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city.[32] Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome.[33] The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen,[34] intrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity,[35] repaired and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmost vigilance to oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms.[36]

Decius revives the office of censor in the person of Valerian.

At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind, calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis, without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the obsolete office of censor; an office which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state,[37] till it was usurped and gradually neglected by the Cæsars.[38] Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of

[32] Ammian. xxxi. 5.

[33] Aurel. Victor [de Cæsar.] c. 29.

[34] *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on some medals of Decius, insinuate these advantages.

[35] Claudius (who afterwards reigned with so much glory) was posted in the pass of Thermopylæ with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and 160 light horse, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well-armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officer, in the Augustan History, p. 208. [Treb. Poll. in Claud. c. 16.]

[36] Jornandes, c. 16–18. Zosimus, l. i. [c. 23] p. 22. In the general account of this war it is easy to discover the opposite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In carelessness alone they are alike.

[37] Montesquieu, Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, c. viii. He illustrates the nature and use of the censorship with his usual ingenuity, and with uncommon precision

[38] Vespasian and Titus were the last censors (Pliny, Hist. Natur. vii. 49 [50]. Censorinus de Die Natali). The modesty of Trajan refused an honour which he deserved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60.

the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and, before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprised him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy Valerian," said the prince to his distinguished subject, "happy in the general approbation of the senate "and of the Roman republic! Accept the censorship of mankind; "and judge of our manners. You will select those who deserve to "continue members of the senate; you will restore the equestrian "order to its ancient splendour; you will improve the revenue, yet "moderate the public burdens. You will distinguish into regular "classes the various and infinite multitude of citizens, and accurately "review the military strength, the wealth, the virtue, and the resources "of Rome. Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws. The "army, the palace, the ministers of justice, and the great officers of "the empire, are all subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, "excepting only the ordinary consuls,[39] the præfect of the city, the "king of the sacrifices, and (as long as she preserves her chastity "inviolate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even these few, who "may not dread the severity, will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the "Roman censor."[40]

A.D. 251, Oct. 27.

A magistrate invested with such extensive powers would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign.[41] Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated that the office of censor was inseparable from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power.[42] The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable; and, whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment, which would most probably have attended it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, the

The design impracticable, and without effect.

[39] Yet, in spite of this exemption, Pompey appeared before that tribunal during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular and honourable. Plutarch. in Pomp. [c. 22] p. 630.

[40] See the original speech in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174. [Treb. Poll. in Valerian, c. 2.]

[41] This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii. c. 20, p. 625, ed. Paris [p. 585, ed. Bonn].

[42] Hist. August. p. 174. [Treb. Poll. l. c.] The emperor's reply is omitted.

morals of a state. It is impossible for such a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unless he is supported by a quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of the people, by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices combating on the side of national manners. In a period when these principles are annihilated, the censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial instrument of vexatious oppression.[43] It was easier to vanquish the Goths than to eradicate the public vices; yet, even in the first of these enterprises, Decius lost his army and his life.

Defeat and death of Decius and his son.

The Goths were now, on every side, surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the North, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high-spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure town of Mæsia, called Forum Trebonii,[44] was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic.[45] The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. "Here the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverse "to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who "stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour heavy, the "waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their

[43] Such as the attempts of Augustus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. iii. 24.

[44] Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 598. As Zosimus and some of his followers mistake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia.

[45] Aurelius Victor allows two distinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jornandes.

"weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were enured "to encounters in the bogs, their persons tall, their spears long, such "as could wound at a distance."[46] In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found.[47] Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace;[48] who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue.[49]

Election of Gallus, A.D. 251, December.

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whose experience and ability seemed equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire.[50] The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and, what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions.[51]

A.D. 252.

Retreat of the Goths.

Gallus purchases peace by the payment of an annual tribute.

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin.[52] After the wealth of nations

[46] I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. i. 64) the picture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

[47] Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. i. [c. 23] p. 22. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 20] p. 627, ed. Paris [p. 589, ed. Bonn]. Aurelius Victor. [Epitome, c. 29.]

[48] The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred and fifty-one, since the new princes took possession of the consulship on the ensuing calends of January.

[49] Hist. August. p. 223 [Vopisc. Aurel. c. 42], gives them a very honourable place among the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus and Diocletian.

[50] Hæc ubi Patres comperere . . . . . decernunt. Victor in Cæsaribus [c. 30].

[51] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 21] p. 628 [p. 589, ed. Bonn].

[52] A *Sella*, a *Toga*, and a golden *Patera* of five pounds weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt (Livy, xxvii. 4). *Quina millia Æris*,

had centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt.[53] But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus;[54] and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor.[55] The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration[56] served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent; and as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

Popular discontent.

But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expense of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by Æmilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mæsia; who rallied the scattered forces and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle.[57]

Victory and revolt of Æmilianus, A.D. 253.

a weight of copper, in value about eighteen pounds sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Livy, xxxi. 9).

[53] See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 25, edit. Louvre.

[54] For the plague, see Jornandes, c. 19, and Victor in Cæsaribus [c. 30].

[55] These improbable accusations are alleged by Zosimus, l. i. [c. 24] p. 23, 24.

[56] Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at least observed the peace which his victorious countrymen had sworn to Gallus.

[57] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 28] p. 25, 26.

Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach, of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in sight of each other the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a considerable increase of pay to all deserters.[58] The murder of Gallus and of his son Volusianus put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and, contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the East.[59] His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger.[60]

Gallus abandoned and slain, A.D. 253, May.

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time necessary to fulfil these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall.[61] He had vanquished Gallus: he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany[62] to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and, as he arrived too late to save his sovereign, he resolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and, as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs,[a] but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the possession of

Valerian revenges the death of Gallus, and is acknowledged emperor. A.D. 253, August.

[58] Victor in Cæsaribus [c. 31].
[59] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 22] p. 628 [p. 591, ed. Bonn]. [60] Banduri Numismata, p. 94.
[61] Eutropius, l. ix. c. 5, says tertio mense. Eusebius omits this emperor.
[62] Zosimus, l. i. c. 29. Eutropius and Victor station Valerian's army in Rhætia.

[a] Victor, in Cæsaribus, says that Æmilianus died a natural death; but in the Epitome he agrees with the other authorities in stating that Æmilianus was assassinated.—S.

the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned.

Valerian was about sixty years of age[63] when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state he had deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himself the enemy of tyrants.[64] His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and, if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to choose a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian.[65] Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old age. The consciousness of his decline engaged him to share the throne with a younger and more active associate:[66] the emergency of the times demanded a general no less than a prince; and the experience of the Roman censor might have directed him where to bestow the Imperial purple as the reward of military merit. But, instead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, consulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately invested with the supreme honours his son Gallienus, a youth whose effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of a private station. The joint government of the father and the son subsisted about seven, and the sole administration of Gallienus continued about eight years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity by pursuing not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were—1. The

Character of Valerian.

General misfortunes of the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, A.D. 253-268.

[63] He was about seventy at the time of his accession, or, as it is more probable, of his death. Hist. August, p. 173. [Pollio in Valer. c. 1.] Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 893, note 1.

[64] Inimicus Tyrannorum. Hist. August. p. 173. [Pollio, l. c.] In the glorious struggle of the senate against Maximin, Valerian acted a very spirited part. Hist. August. p. 156. [Capitol. Gordiani Tres, c. 9.]

[65] According to the distinction of Victor, he seems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Augustus from the senate.

[66] From Victor and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 710) very justly infers that Gallienus was associated to the empire about the month of August of the year 253.

Franks; 2. The Alemanni; 3. The Goths; and 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

Inroads of the barbarians.

I. As the posterity of the Franks compose one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted, every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed that Pannonia,[67] that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany,[68] gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its truth.[69] They suppose that, about the year two hundred and forty,[70] a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the Landgraviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Luneburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms;[71] of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown.[72] The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks, or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy.[73 a] Tacit consent and

Origin and confederacy of the Franks.

[67] Various systems have been formed to explain a difficult passage in Gregory of Tours, l. ii. c. 9.

[68] The Geographer of Ravenna, i. 11, by mentioning *Mauringania*, on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient seat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious system of Leibnitz.

[69] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 20. M. Freret, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

[70] Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 710, 1181.

[71] Plin. Hist. Natur. xvi. 1. The Panegyrists frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks.

[72] Tacit. Germania, c. 30–37.

[73] In a subsequent period most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii.

[a] The term Frank, like that of Marcomanni (see p. 370), was probably applied to several confederacies on the Roman frontier, which called themselves by this name in opposition to their fellow-Germans in the Decumates agri, who were subject to Rome. Hence Dr. Latham remarks that, instead of assuming migra

mutual advantage dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience. The league of the Franks may admit of some comparison with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent sovereignty, consults with its brethren in the common cause, without acknowledging the authority of any supreme head or representative assembly.[74] But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn treaties, disgraced the character of the Franks.

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their strength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invasion, and required the presence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power.[75] Whilst that prince and his infant son Saloninus displayed in the court of Treves the majesty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Posthumus, who, though he afterwards betrayed the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great interest of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long series of victories. Trophies and titles attest (if such evidence can attest) the fame of Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled The Conqueror of the Germans, and the Saviour of Gaul.[76]

They invade Gaul, A.D. 256,

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases in a great measure these monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees; nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greatest part of the reign of

ravage Spain,

[74] Simler de Republicâ Helvet. cum notis Fuselin.

[75] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 30] p. 27.

[76] M. de Brequigny (in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxx.) has given us a very curious Life of Posthumus. A series of the Augustan History from Medals and Inscriptions has been more than once planned, and is still much wanted.[a]

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tions (many of them in the face of historical probabilities) to account for the Franks of *France*, the Franks of *Franche-Comté*, and the Franks of *Franconia*, we may simply suppose them to be Franks of a different division of the Frank name. See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Epil. p. lviii. *seq.*—S.

[a] M. Eckhel, Keeper of the Cabinet of Medals and Professor of Antiquities at Vienna, lately deceased, has supplied this want by his excellent work, Doctrina veterum Numorum, conscripta a Jos. Eckhel, 8 vol. in 4to. Vindobona, 1797.—G. Captain Smyth has likewise printed (privately) a valuable Descriptive Catalogue of a series of Large Brass Medals of this period. Bedford, 1834.—M. 1845.

Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed;[77] and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians.[78] When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels in the ports of Spain[79] and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these barbarians, who seemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion were equally unknown on the coast of Africa.[80]

and pass over into Africa.

II. In that part of Upper Saxony, beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the Marquisate of Lusace, there existed in ancient times a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity.[81] Patriotism contributed, as well as devotion, to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones.[82] It was universally believed that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood resorted thither by their ambassadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human sacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that showed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy.[83] Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vast army, encountered the dictator Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a disgrace to have fled before a people to whose arms the immortal gods themselves were unequal.[84]

Origin and renown of the Suevi.

[77] Aurel. Victor. (de Cæsar.) c. 33. Instead of *Pæne direpto*, both the sense and the expression require *deleto*; though indeed, for different reasons, *it* is alike difficult to correct the text of the best, and of the worst, writers.

[78] In the time of Ausonius (the end of the fourth century) Ilerda or Lerida was in a very ruinous state (Auson. Epist. xxv. 58), which probably was the consequence of this invasion.

[79] Valesius is therefore mistaken in supposing that the Franks had invaded Spain by sea.

[80] Aurel. Victor. [l. c.] Eutrop. ix. 6.

[81] Tacit. Germania, 39.

[82] Cluver. Germ. Antiq. iii. 25.

[83] Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, sic Suevorum ingenui a servis separantur. A proud separation!

[84] Cæsar in Bello Gallico, iv. 7.

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla an innumerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Main, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, of plunder, or of glory.[85] The hasty army of volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Alemanni, or *Allmen*, to denote at once their various lineage and their common bravery.[86] The latter was soon felt by the Romans in many a hostile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horseback; but their cavalry was rendered still more formidable by a mixture of light infantry selected from the bravest and most active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had enured to accompany the horseman in the longest march, the most rapid charge, or the most precipitate retreat.[87]

A mixed body of Suevi assume the name of Alemanni,

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparations of Alexander Severus; they were dismayed by the arms of his successor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But, still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul: they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated across the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome.[88] The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far distant wars, Valerian in the East, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and

invade Gaul and Italy,

A.D. 259, are repulsed from Rome by the senate and people.

[85] Victor in Caracal. [de Cæsar. c. 21.] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. [c. 13, *seq.*] p. 1299, *seq.*

[86] This etymology (far different from those which amuse the fancy of the learned) is preserved by Asinius Quadratus, an original historian, quoted by Agathias, i. c. 6.[a]

[87] The Suevi engaged Cæsar in this manner, and the manœuvre deserved the approbation of the conqueror (in Bello Gallico, i. 48).

[88] Hist. August. p. 215, 216. [Vopisc. Aurel. c. 18 and 21.] Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8 [ed. Paris; p. 8, ed. Ven.; p. 13, ed. Bonn]. Hieronym. Chron. Orosius, vii. 22.

[a] This etymology, however, has not been received by all modern critics, and it has been observed that the *Al* in *Ale*manni may be translated by "alii" as well as by "omnes," and that it was perhaps applied by the truer and more unequivocal Germans of Suabia and Franconia to a mixed population from Wurtemberg and Baden, more especially as Asinius Quadratus said that the Alemanni were "a gathered mob and *mixed* race" (ξύγκλυδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ μίγαδες). Hence the *al* in *Ale*-manni has been supposed to be the same with the *al* in *alir*-arto (a foreigner, or a man of another sort), *eli*-bonzo (an alien), *ali*-laud (captivity in foreign land), and *al*-satia=*el*-satz (foreign settlement). See Latham, The Germania of Tacitus, Epil. p. lii. *seq.* - S.

resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency the senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers by enlisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the Plebeians. The Alemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany laden with spoil; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans.[89]

The senators excluded by Gallienus from the military service.

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted than alarmed with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the public from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted as a favour this disgraceful exemption from military service; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers.[90]

Gallienus contracts an alliance with the Alemanni.

Another invasion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the Lower Empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans.[91] We may, however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory either to the credulity of the historian, or to some exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He espoused Pipa, the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conquests.[92] To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished beauty seem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by those of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still refused the name of marriage

[89] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 37] p. 34.

[90] Aurel. Victor. in Gallieno et Probo. [de Cæsar. c. 34 and 37.] His complaints breathe an uncommon spirit of freedom.

[91] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 24] p. 631 [p. 596, ed. Bonn.]

[92] One of the Victors calls him king of the Marcomanni; the other, of the Germans.

to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has stigmatised the German princess with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus.[93]

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at least from Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the last-mentioned river was perpetually infested by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than usual firmness and success. The provinces that were the seat of war recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers; and more than one of these Illyrian peasants attained the station, and displayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia, their progress was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the Imperial lieutenants.[94] But the great stream of the Gothic hostilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new settlement of the Ukraine, soon became masters of the northern coast of the Euxine: to the south of that inland sea were situated the soft and wealthy provinces of Asia Minor, which possessed all that could attract, and nothing that could resist, a barbarian conqueror. Inroads of the Goths.

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty miles distant from the narrow entrance[95] of the peninsula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Chersonesus Taurica.[96] On that inhospitable shore Euripides, embellishing with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the scene of one of his most affecting tragedies.[97] The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were in some degree reclaimed from their brutal manners by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian colonies which settled along the maritime coast. The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital was situated on the straits through which the Mæotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was composed of degenerate Greeks and half-civilised barbarians. It subsisted as an independent state from the time of the Peloponnesian war,[98] was at last swallowed up by the Conquest of the Bosphorus by the Goths.

[93] See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c.
[94] See the Lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Augustan History.
[95] It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 598.
[96] M. de Peyssonel, who had been French consul at Caffa, in his Observations sur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.
[97] Euripides in Iphigenia in Tauris.
[98] Strabo, l. vii. p. 309. The first kings of Bosphorus were the allies of Athens.

ambition of Mithridates,[99] and, with the rest of his dominions, sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Augustus[100] the kings of Bosphorus were the humble, but not useless, allies of the empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight fortification drawn across the isthmus, they effectually guarded, against the roving plunderers of Sarmatia, the access of a country which, from its peculiar situation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine Sea and Asia Minor.[101] As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of their important charge with vigilance and success. Domestic factions, and the fears or private interest of obscure usurpers who seized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a superfluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force sufficient to transport their armies to the coast of Asia.[102] The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very singular construction. They were slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the least mixture of iron, and occasionally covered with a shelving roof on the appearance of a tempest.[103] In these floating houses the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder had banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied in their minds the more rational confidence which is the just result of knowledge and experience. Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often murmured against the cowardice of their guides, who required the strongest assurances of a settled calm before they would venture to embark, and would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of the land. Such, at least, is the practice of the modern Turks;[104] and they are probably not inferior in the art of navigation to the ancient inhabitants of Bosphorus.

who acquire a naval force.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus,[105] the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with

First naval expedition of the Goths.

[99] Appian in Mithridat. [c. 67.]

[100] It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Orosius, vi. 21. Eutropius, vii. 5. The Romans once advanced within three days' march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii. 17.

[101] See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the sincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation against the kings of Bosphorus.

[102] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 31] p. 28.

[103] Strabo, l. xi. [p. 495.] Tacit. Hist. iii. 47. They were called *Camaræ*.

[104] See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the xvith letter of Tournefort.

[105] Arrian places the frontier garrison at Dioscurias, or Sebastopolis, forty-four miles to the east of Pityus. The garrison of Phasis consisted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine [c. 10].

a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace.[106] A.D. 258, 259.

Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine Sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles.[107] The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the Ten Thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks,[108] derived its wealth and splendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours.[109] The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the night, and entered the defenceless city, sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense: the wealth of the adjacent countries had been deposited in Trebizond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus.[110] The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the sea-coast were chained to the The Goths besiege and take Trebizond.

[106] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 32–33] p. 30.

[107] Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxini [c. 27 and 28], p. 130) calls the distance 2610 stadia.

[108] Xenophon, Anabasis, l. iv. [c. 8, 22] p. 348, edit. Hutchinson.

[109] Arrian, p. 129. The general observation is Tournefort's.

[110] See an epistle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, quoted by Mascou, v. 37.

oar; and the Goths, satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus.[111]

The second expedition of the Goths.

The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdaining the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Dniester, and the Danube, and, increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine Sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the strait; and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops surpassed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon,[112] directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apamæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled or imitated the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without control through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres.[113]

They plunder the cities of Bithynia.

Retreat of the Goths.

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates,[114] it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals—of arms, of military engines, and of corn.[115] It was still the seat of wealth and

[111] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 33] p. 32, 33.
[112] Itiner. Hierosolym. p. 572. Wesseling.
[113] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 35] p. 32, 33.
[114] He besieged the place with 400 galleys, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. [c. 9.] Appian in Mithridat. [c. 72.] Cicero pro Lege Manilia, c. 8.
[115] Strabo, l. xii. p. 575.

luxury; but of its ancient strength nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles[116] of the city, which they had devoted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream and stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt.[117] Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat.[118] But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly.[119]

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships,[120] our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured by the judicious Strabo[121] that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm that fifteen thousand warriors at the most embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the straits they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind, springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake, of the Propontis. Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From

Third naval expedition of the Goths.

They pass the Bosphorus and the Hellespont.

[116] Pocock's Description of the East, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

[117] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 35] p. 33.

[118] Syncellus tells an unintelligible story of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus* [p. 382, ed. Paris; vol. i. p. 717, ed. Bonn].

[119] Voyages de Chardin, tom. i. p. 45. He sailed with the Turks from Constantinople to Caffa.

[120] Syncellus (p. 382) speaks of this expedition as undertaken by the Heruli.

[121] Strabo, l. xi. p. 495.

thence issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago or the Ægean Sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens,[122] which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay since the time of Sylla. The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the licence of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country.[123]

A.D. 262,

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his presence seems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the strength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen

ravage Greece, and threaten Italy.

[122] Plin. Hist. Natur. iv. 7 [11].

[123] Hist. August. p. 181. [Pollio, Gallieni, ii. c. 13.] Victor [de Cæsar.], c. 33. Orosius, vii. 42. Zosimus, l. i. [c. 39] p. 35. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 26] p. 635 [ed. Paris; vol. ii. p. 605, ed. Bonn]. Syncellus, p. 382 [vol. i. p. 717, ed. Bonn]. It is not without some attention that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can still discover some traces of the partiality of Dexippus in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits.[a]

[a] According to a new fragment of Dexippus, published by Mai, he had 2000 men. He took up a strong position in a mountainous and woody district, and kept up a harassing warfare. He expresses a hope of being speedily joined by the Imperial fleet. Dexippus in nov. Byzantinorum. Collect. a Niebuhr, pp. 26–28.—M.

into the service of Rome, and was invested with the ornaments of the consular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian.[124] Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæsia, with a design of forcing their way over the Danube to their settlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable destruction if the discord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an escape.[125] The small remainder of this destroying host returned on board their vessels, and, measuring back their way through the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immortalised by Homer, will probably survive the memory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they found themselves in safety within the bason of the Euxine they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus, and, after all their toils, indulged themselves in the use of those pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a short and easy navigation.[126] Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In these expeditions the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are sometimes distinguished and sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixed multitude.[127]

Their divisions and retreat.

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing

Ruin of the temple of Ephesus.

[124] Syncellus, p. 382 [vol. i. p. 717, ed. Bonn]. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous.

[125] Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety and acted with spirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hist. August. p. 181. [Treb. Poll. Gallieni II. c. 14].

[126] Jornandes, c. 20.

[127] Zosimus and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris) give the name of Scythians to those whom Jornandes and the Latin writers constantly represent as Goths.

splendour from seven repeated misfortunes,[128] was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion. The arts of Greece and the wealth of Asia had conspired to erect that sacred and magnificent structure. It was supported by an hundred and twenty-seven marble columns of the Ionic order; they were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of the place the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons.[129] Yet the length of the temple of Ephesus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds of the measure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome.[130] In the other dimensions it was still more inferior to that sublime production of modern architecture. The spreading arms of a Christian cross require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldest artists of antiquity would have been startled at the proposal of raising in the air a dome of the size and proportions of the Pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity and enriched its splendour.[131] But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition.[132]

Conduct of the Goths at Athens.

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told that in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design, by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms.[133] The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an

[128] Hist. Aug. p. 178. [Pollio, Gallieni II. c. 6.] Jornandes, c. 20.

[129] Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. i. præfat. l. vii. Tacit. Annal. iii. 61. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvi. 14 [§ 21].

[130] The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is very little short of nine English inches. See Greaves's Miscellanies, vol. i. p. 233; on the Roman Foot.[a]

[131] The policy, however, of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which by successive privileges had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.

[132] They offered no sacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epistol. Gregor. Thaumat.

[133] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 26] p. 635 [p. 605, ed. Bonn]. Such an anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable Essay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24.

[a] St. Paul's cathedral is 500 feet. Dallaway on Architecture, p. 203.—M.

ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

IV. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malecontents; by the alliance of the Romans; and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms during a thirty years' war, he was at length assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor, king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued above twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia.[134] Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhæ and Nisibis [a] to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

Conquest of Armenia by the Persians.

A.D. 198.

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished, and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the

Valerian marches into the East.

Is defeated and taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia, A.D. 260.

[134] Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 21] p. 628 [p. 590, ed. Bonn]. The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant. [Compare St. Martin, Mémoires sur l'Arménie, i. p. 301.—M.]

[a] Nisibis, according to Persian authors, was taken by a miracle: the wall fell, in compliance with the prayers of the army. Malcolm's Persia, i. 76.—M.

glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian præfect.[135] That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies, of Rome.[136] By his weak or wicked counsels the Imperial army was betrayed into a situation where valour and military skill were equally unavailing.[137] The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter;[138] and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and, detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms.[139] In such a moment of triumph the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army.[140]

Sapor overruns Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

The Imperial slave was eager to secure the favour of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry that, if we may credit a very judicious historian,[141]

[135] Hist. Aug. p. 191. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Macriano, 11.] As Macrianus was an enemy to the Christians, they charged him with being a magician.

[136] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 36] p. 33. [137] Hist. Aug. p. 174. [Pollio, Valerian, c. 32.]

[138] Victor in Cæsar. [c. 32]. Eutropius, ix. 6.

[139] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 36] p. 33. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 23] p. 630 [p. 593, ed. Bonn]. Peter Patricius, in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29 [p. 128, ed. Bonn].

[140] Hist. August. p. 185. [Pollio, xxx. Tyran. 1.] The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer.

[141] The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5.[a]

[a] Heyne, in his note on Zosimus, contests this opinion of Gibbon; and observes that the testimony of Ammianus is in fact by no means clear or decisive. Gallienus

the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword or led away into captivity.[142] The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaster.[143] But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of Mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader whose principal force consisted in his cavalry would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was permitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty.[144] Much should, undoubtedly, be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the same prince who, in Armenia, had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, showed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces.[145]

[142] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 36] p. 35.

[143] John Malala, tom. i. p. 391 [ed. Oxon.; p. 127, ed. Ven.; p. 296, ed. Bonn]. He corrupts this probable event by some fabulous circumstances.

[144] Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 23] p. 630 [p. 593, ed. Bonn]. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Crowds of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food.

[145] Zosimus, l. i. [p. 25,] asserts that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to conquest, might have remained master of Asia.

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and Valerian reigned together. Zosimus, places this event before the capture of in a second passage, l. iii. 32, distinctly Valerian.—M.

At the time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings—a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. "Who is this "Odenathus" (said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the presents should be cast into the Euphrates), "that he thus inso- "lently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of "mitigating his punishment, let him fall prostrate before the foot of "our throne, with his hands bound behind his back. Should he "hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole "race, and on his country."[146] The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria[147] and the tents of the desert,[148] he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and, what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the Great King; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion.[149] By this exploit Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

Boldness and success of Odenathus against Sapor.

A.D. 261.

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the Imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that, whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and

Treatment of Valerian.

[146] Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29 [ed. Paris; p. 134, ed. Bonn].

[147] Syrorum agrestium manû. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus, Victor, the Augustan History (p. 192) [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, 14], and several inscriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.

[148] He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. l. ii. c. 5) and John Malala (tom. i. p. 392 [ed. Oxon.; p. 127, ed. Ven; p. 297, ed. Bonn]) style him Prince of the Saracens.

[149] Peter Patricius, p. 25 [ed. Paris; p. 18, ed. Ven.; p. 126, ed. Bonn].

formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.[150] The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth [b] of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor are manifest forgeries;[151] nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

Character and administration of Gallienus.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a "mortal," said he; "and, since he has acted as becomes a brave "man, I am satisfied." Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.[152] It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and, as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet,[153] a skilful gardener,

[150] The Pagan writers lament, the Christian insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See Bibliothèque Orientale.[a]

[151] One of these epistles is from Artavasdes, king of Armenia; since Armenia was then a province of Persia, the king, the kingdom, and the epistle must be fictitious.

[152] See his Life in the Augustan History.

[153] There is still extant a very pretty Epithalamium, composed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews.

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter sudate medullis
Omnibus, inter vos: non murmura vestra columbæ,
Brachia non hederæ, non vincant oscula conchæ.
[Pollio, Gallieni II. c. 11.]

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[a] Malcolm appears to write from Persian authorities, i. 76.—M.

[b] Yet Gibbon himself records a speech of the emperor Galerius, which alludes to the cruelties exercised against the living, and the indignities to which they exposed the dead Valerian, ch. 13. Respect for the kingly character would by no means prevent an eastern monarch from gratifying his pride and his vengeance on a fallen foe.—M.

an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus,[154] wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace.[155] The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions he received with a careless smile; and singling out, with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked whether Rome must be ruined unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the cruel tyrant; till, satiated with blood or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character.[156]

The thirty tyrants.

At a time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that

[154] He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania to try the experiment of realising Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Græc. l. iv.

[155] A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former *Gallienæ Augustæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax*. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe satire on that effeminate prince. But as the use of irony may seem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. August. p. 198 [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Celso, 28]) an ingenious and natural solution. *Galliena* was first-cousin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, she deserved the title of Augusta. On a medal in the French king's collection we read a similar inscription of *Faustina Augusta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps, the occasion of some momentary calm. See Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, Janvier, 1700, p. 21–34.[a]

[156] This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy; and the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus.

[a] Eckhel brings forward serious objections to the interpretation of Vallemont. The obverse of the medal represents the head of Gallienus crowned with ears of corn; and Eckhel conjectures that it may have been struck to commemorate the wish of Gallienus to be worshipped in the character of Ceres, especially since he might claim the merits of Ceres after the death of Æmilianus in Egypt, by which Rome again obtained its usual supply of corn. That Gallienus should have caused such medals to be struck will not appear surprising when we recollect that Nero was represented on his coins with the attributes of Apollo, and Commodus with those of Hercules. (Eckhel, vol. vii. p 411, *seq.*)—S.

induced the writers of the Augustan History to select that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation.[157] But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne: Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia in the east; in Gaul and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus,[158] Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and of amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation.[159]

Their real number was no more than nineteen.

It is sufficiently known that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme power, without any reference to the abuse of it. Several of the pretenders who raised the

Character and merit of the tyrants.

[157] Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number.[a]

[158] The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others.

[159] Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently.

[a] Captain Smyth, in his 'Catalogue of Medals,' p. 307, substitutes two new names, to make up the number of nineteen, for those of Odenathus and Zenobia. He subjoins this list:—

1. Of those whose coins are undoubtedly true.	2. Those whose coins are suspected.	3. Those of whom no coins are known.
Posthumus.	Cyriades.	Valens.
Lælianus (*Lollianus*—G.)	Ingenuus.	Balista.
Victorinus.	Celsus.	Saturninus.
Marius.	Piso Frugi.	Trebellianus.
Tetricus.		
Macrianus.		
Quietus.		
Regalianus (*Regillianus*—G.)		
Alex. Æmilianus.		
Aureolus.		
Sulpicius Antoninus		

—M. 1845.

Compare a dissertation of Manso on the Thirty Tyrants, at the end of his Leben Constantins des Grossen, Breslau, 1817. —M.

The following is Clinton's list. It differs in some degree from the preceding lists, and contains two names (Cecrops and Antoninus) not mentioned by Trebellius:—1. Cecrops, Zosim. i. 38. 2. Antoninus, Zosim. *ibid.* 3. Cyriades. 4. Postumus. 5. Lælianus. 6. Marius. 7. Victorinus. 8. Tetricus. 9. Ingenuus. 10. Regalianus. 11. Aureolus. 12. Macrianus. 13. Odenathus. 14. Zenobia. 15. Piso. 16. Valens. 17. Æmilianus. 18. Saturninus. 19. Trebellianus. 20. Celsus. (Clinton, Fast. Rom. vol. ii. p 58, *seq.*)—S.

standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals who assumed the title of Augustus were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the armourer Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty.[160] His mean and recent trade cast, indeed, an air of ridicule on his elevation;[a] but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature; in a general state of war military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso,[161] who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his house, the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey.[162] His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and, of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Cæsars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and, although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel.[163]

Their obscure birth.

[160] See the speech of Marius, in the Augustan History, p. 187. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Mario, 7.] The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Sallust.

[161] Vos, O Pompilius sanguis! is Horace's address to the Pisos. See Art. Poet. v. 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

[162] Tacit. Annal. xv. 48, Hist. i. 15. In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13); a second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæsar, by Galba.

[163] Hist. August. p. 195. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Pisone, 20.] The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

[a] Marius was killed by a soldier who had formerly served as a workman in his shop, and who exclaimed as he struck, "Behold the sword which thyself hast forged." Treb. [Pollio] in vitâ.—G.

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus: they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them to secure a short enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. "You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you "have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched "emperor." [164] The causes of their rebellion.

The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honours as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended indeed to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia.[165] Their violent deaths.

[164] Hist. August. p. 196. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Saturnino, 22.]

[165] The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole

Fatal consequences of these usurpations.

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher, were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops by an immense donative drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate such as have ap- "peared in arms: the chance of battle might have served me as 'effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; pro- "vided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can "contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has "dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, "against *me*, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many "princes.[166] Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, "kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would "inspire you with my own feelings." [167] Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their situation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy.[168]

Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as

reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180. [Pollio, Gallieni II. c. 12.] [It took place A.D. 264.—S.]

[166] Gallienus had given the titles of Cæsar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire: several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii., and M. de Brequigny in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

[167] Hist. August. p. 188. [Pollio, xxx. Tyran. de Ingenuo, 8.]

[168] Regillianus had some bands of Roxolani in his service; Posthumus a body of Franks. It was, perhaps, in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain.

the barrenness of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There still remain some particular facts—I. The disorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and III. The rebellion of the Isaurians—which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

Disorders of Sicily.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding, the justice of their country, we may safely infer that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported an usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.[169] Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

Tumults of Alexandria.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles;[170] it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves.[171] The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire.[a] Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry, nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations suited to their condition.[172] But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks with the superstition and obstinacy of the

[169] The Augustan History, p. 177 [Pollio, Gallieni duo, c. 4], calls it *servile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv. [Fr. II.]

[170] Plin. Hist. Natur. v. 10 [§ 11].

[171] Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. [c. 52] p. 590, edit. Wesseling.

[172] See a very curious letter of Hadrian, in the Augustan History, p. 245. [Vopisc. Saturn. c. 8.]

[a] Berenice, or Myos-Hormos, on the Red Sea, received the eastern commodities. From thence they were transported to the Nile, and down the Nile to Alexandria.—M.

Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious dispute,[173] were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable.[174] After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years.[175] All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and musæum, the residence of the kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described, above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of dreary solitude.[176]

Rebellion of the Isaurians.

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile valleys[177] supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness by surrounding the hostile and independent spot with a strong chain of fortifications,[178]

[173] Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. i. [c. 83.][a]

[174] Hist. August. p. 195. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Æmil. 21.] This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsman about a pair of shoes.

[175] Dionysius apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii. c. 21. Ammian. xxii. 16.

[176] Scaliger. Animadver. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mém. de l'Académie, tom. ix.

[177] Strabo, l. xiii. p. 569.

[178] Hist. August. p. 197. [Pollio, xxx. Tyranni, de Trebell. 25.]

[a] The hostility between the Jewish and Grecian part of the population, afterwards between the two former and the Christian, were unfailing causes of tumult, sedition, and massacre. In no place were the religious disputes, after the establishment of Christianity, more frequent or more sanguinary. See Philo. de Legat. Hist. of Jews, ii. 171, iii. 111, 198. Gibbon, c. xxi. & xlvii.—M.

which often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea-coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey.[179]

Famine and pestilence.

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated.[180] But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome, and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated.[181]

Diminution of the human species.

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus.[182] Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species.[183]

[179] See Cellarius, Geogr. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.

[180] Hist. August. p. 177. [Pollio, Gallieni II. c. 5.]

[181] Hist. August. p. 177. [id. ib.] Zosimus, l. i. [c. 26] p. 24. Zonaras, l. xii. [c. 21] p. 623. [p. 590, ed. Bonn.] Euseb. Chronicon. [An. CCLIII.] Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. [c. 33.] Eutropius, ix. v. Orosius, vii. 21.

[182] Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who, in the time of those troubles, was bishop of Alexandria.

[183] In a great number of parishes 11,000 persons were found between fourteen and eighty: 5365 between forty and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

END OF VOL. I.

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A Map
of the
EASTERN PART
of the
ROMAN EMPIRE,
Corrected according to the latest authorities.
EUROPE
SARMATIA ASIATICA
PONTUS EUXINUS or BLACK SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
AFRICA
ARABIA
DESERTA
PERSIA
ETHIOPIA

A MAP
of the
WESTERN PART
OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.
Corrected according to the latest authorities.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GERMANY
SPAIN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
AFRICA
LIBYA
SARMATIA
UKRAINE
YENNI
Syrtis Major
Tyrrhenian Sea

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